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## Hasina moves to get back GSP

Tofail says 13 of 16 conditions set by US have been met to regain the facility

Mohosinul Karim

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has issued directives to expedite the fulfillment of the remaining conditions, set by the US, to regain the generalised system of preferences (GSP).

She also asked the labour and employment ministry to strengthen the newly formed Directorate of Factories and Institutes, by appointing inspectors immediately.

**B1>> MORE STORIES**

The prime minister issued the directives at the regular cabinet meeting yesterday.

Hasina asked the state minister for labour and other ministry officials to complete the appointment of 200 factory inspectors, in accordance with the conditions, a minister told the Dhaka Tribune, seeking anonymity.

The minister, who attended the cabinet meeting, said: "The Prime Minister expressed her wish to fulfil the posts with qualified BCS [Bangladesh Civil

Service] aspirants, as there would not be any problems appointing them in those class-I posts."

On June 27 last year, the US government suspended its GSP benefits for Bangladesh, in response to the conditions in Bangladesh's garment factories.

However, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday said 13 of the 16 conditions set out by the US to regain the GSP facilities had been fulfilled, adding the remaining three conditions will be fulfilled by April.

The remaining conditions are appointing 200 more fire inspectors, allowing trade unions at the RMG factories located in EPZ areas, and giving clarification on the allegations of torture of workers at some factories.

Bangladesh wants to raise the issue of regaining GSP facilities at the meeting of the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (Ticfa), likely to be held in Dhaka on April 7; but the matter would depend on the willingness of the US authorities, commerce ministry officials have said.

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## Mufti Izhar, his son charged for madrasa blast

Tarek Mahmud, Chittagong

Police yesterday submitted charge sheet against nine persons including radical Hefazat-e-Islam leader Mufti Izharul Islam Chowdhury and his son Mufti Harun in one of the three cases filed over bomb blasts at the leader's madrasa in Chittagong city's Lalkhan Bazar on October 7 last year.

The other accused in the explosives case are the madrasa's Dinning Superintendent Munir Hossain; teachers Tafsir Ahmed and Abdul Mannan; and students Habibur Rahman, Abdul Hye alias Salman, Md Ishaq and Md Junayed.

Harun is in jail while his father, Hefazat's senior nayebe-e-ameer, has been on the run since the incident. Mufti Izhar is the also ameer of a faction of the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), an ally of the BNP-Jamaat-led 19-party alliance.

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## Retired cops, OCs abet criminals

Mohammad Jamil Khan

Criminals in the guise of law enforcers are committing murders, extortions, abductions and muggings in the capital, and elsewhere in the country, raising concern amongst the people.

Most of these criminals work in close association with the OCs (officers-in-charge) of local police stations, and often retired police officers work as gang leaders. The criminals also share a part of the loot with the police.

Information about such criminal rings has been revealed by the members of intelligence agencies, after interrogating some criminals arrested recently, including 20 who were arrested in Mohammadpur area on Sunday.

Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of Police, told the Dhaka Tribune that they had arrested a gang in the last couple of days which was headed by a retired police official. "Retired police or intelligence officials mainly work as

ringleaders of these gangs," he said.

Asked about the number of fake police officers operating as criminals, he said it would be double the original number of DB members. "We are yet to know details, but we are working to get more accurate information from these gangs," he added.

### Fake police officers heading gangs, leading crime sprees

According to a source at a state-run intelligence agency, there are around 22 criminal gangs having around 12-16 members each, who often disguise themselves as fake police officers and commit crimes.

It was learnt in an investigation that imposters can easily bribe law enforcers and get a uniform for only Tk2,500, a pistol holster for Tk1,200, handcuffs Tk1,500 and a wireless set

for Tk2,000 from different shops.

Posing as the members of intelligence agencies or as RAB members, criminals riding on microbus or motorcycles go to the target person's residence or intercept them on the way. They handcuff their prey, take them to their dens, and either rob or kill them.

Such incidents have been taking place across the country, including in the capital, for quite some time.

A DMP official said some 40 shops at Polwel Supermarket in Nayapaltan and Ibrahimpur Kachukhet Market are allowed to sell police equipment only to the law enforcers.

However, the shop owners for higher profits sell those to everyone, including the criminal gangs. The retired police officials help the criminals collect these instruments.

Talking with this reporter, a gang member said they usually give a share of the loot to the local police station officers to continue their activities.

>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 2

## Khaleda bashes Dhaka city leaders for failure

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has slammed the party's city unit leaders for their "failure" during the street movement to resist the January 5 poll and threatened to form a new committee dissolving the existing one.

Party insiders said in the closed-door meeting held for over an hour, the leaders described why they had not been able to play their due role during the non-stop agitation that began after the Election Commission announced poll schedule on November 25.

"This [Dhaka] committee has utterly failed to carry out their duties. They even failed to form ward and thana committees within two years. Some pocket committees were formed and they were not on the streets. So I will declare a new committee soon," said a city leader quoting Khaleda.

She also observed that other associate and front organisations had also been also inactive. After the formation of the city committee, those bodies would be reformed too.

"Khaleda Zia said 'you never took the street. When I was evicted from my cantonment residence, none opened fire and at that time, you were not seen on the streets. You have failed,'" a senior leader said seeking anonymity.

Admitting their failure, the city leaders said they had not been courageous enough to face the law enforcers who "opened fire" on them. Abdus Salam, member secretary of the unit, urged Khaleda to pardon them and form the new committee from all the leaders.

This made Khaleda fuming who then said: "[How dare] you dictate me! Do I have to ask you who I will keep in the committee? Shut up!"

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### INSIDE

#### Business

**B1** If the United States does not want, talks on regaining the Generalised System of Preferences will not be possible at the first meeting of Ticfa likely to be held in Dhaka on April 7.

#### News

**4** Prices of common medicines have increased by 10-15% in the last six months and those including foreign medicines.

#### Nation

**6** All of the 33 brick kilns are running illegally on the croplands in Lalmonirhat, violating rules of Department of Environment (DoE).

#### Op-Ed

**11** Valentine's Day is the unavoidable anniversary, a reminder that never fails to annoy with its constantly increasing demands year-over-year.

### SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

## RAB reluctant to follow DB in 'admitting failure'

Kailash Sarkar

Elite force Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is now in an embracing situation as it has apparently failed, like the Detective Branch of police, to unearth the mysterious killings of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi occurred two years back.

According to sources, the crime busters intend to express its failure but the officials are not ready to face the embarrassing situation.

'The time is yet to come to admit the failure of unfolding the mystery. We are still hopeful and trying our best.'

The investigators of RAB could not even identify any of the suspects nor recovered the mobile phone, laptop and iPod looted from the house of the couple during the murders.

They even do not have contact with the victims' families.

In this circumstance, the families of both Sagar and Runi expressed frustrations as well as anger because of the

constant failure of the government's investigating agencies in resolving the sensational case.

It is the only case in which a law enforcement or investigating agency surrendered before the court admitting failure to unearth the mystery.

The journalist couple was found dead at their rented house in the capital's West Rajabazar in the morning of February 11, 2012.

Following the murder, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police started investigation in a case filed over the incident. Later the case was shifted to the DB, but the court in an order shifted the case to the RAB for investigation as the DB had expressed its inability.

Talking to the Dhaka Tribune, neither the state minister for home nor any RAB high officials could say about the reasons why there was no development in the investigation though two years have passed since the brutal murders.

State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on Sunday night told the Dhaka Tribune: "We only come to know what the investigators tell us. Only they will be able to say about the real causes of their failures or delay."

He claimed that the RAB personnel

>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 5



# সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

উদ্ভাবনী ব্যাংকিং এ আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সঙ্গী

৮৭৫টি শাখার যে কোন এক শাখা থেকে অন্য শাখায় আপনিঃ-

আপনি জানেন কি?

দেশব্যাপী বিস্তৃত

সোনালী ব্যাংকের

৮৭৫ টি

শাখা বর্তমানে

অনলাইনের আওতায়

রয়েছে!!

➤ সঞ্চয়ী, চলতি ও SND হিসাবে তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে টাকা জমা ও উত্তোলন করতে পারবেন

➤ ব্যাংকের ডিপোজিট স্কীম ভুক্ত হিসাবে এবং ঋণ হিসাবে তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে টাকা জমা করতে পারবেন

➤ প্রচলিত টিটির পরিবর্তে সরাসরি Real Time এ যে কোন হিসেবে স্বল্প খরচে টাকা জমা করতে পারবেন

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➤ মার্চ-২০১৪ এর মধ্যে সকল শাখা অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রমের আওতায় আসছে

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৩৫-৪২, ৪৪ মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ



WISH YOU A GOOD DAY

PRAN Jelly



Khaleda had repeatedly asked the city unit leaders to take to the streets but they did not pay any heed, rather went into hiding to avert arrest. After the January 5 election, she said the committees would be reformed before waging movement. ●



## MAJ GEN MANZOOR MURDER CASE

# New judge defers verdict to hear arguments afresh

## Court calls for deposition of Maj Emdad

Md Sanaul Islam Tipu

The new judge of the Dhaka court dealing with Maj Gen Manzoor murder case yesterday - the day it was scheduled to deliver verdict - set February 27 to start re-hearing arguments.

Khondokar Hasan Md Firoz, the new first additional district and sessions judge of Dhaka, passed the order yesterday.

Judge Firoj said as he was new to the court and since the case was an old and sensational one, he had to hear afresh the arguments from both defence and prosecution before proceeding.

The court also called for the deposition of Maj Emdadul, one of the accused in the case, under the provision of self-defence.

On January 22, Firoj's predecessor Hosne Ara Akhtar, who was transferred to another court on January 29, fixed February 10 (yesterday), for delivering verdict.

Hosne Ara's transfer gave rise to speculations surrounding whether the

verdict in the case would be delivered on the due date or not.

One of the main accused in the case - filed nearly 19 years ago in connection with the 32-year old murder - is former military dictator and Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad, who has recently been appointed special envoy to the prime minister.

Even Ershad's counsel said the transfer of the judge just before verdict date was "abnormal."

A court official said Hosne Ara Akhtar, along with seven other judges, were reshuffled to speed up court proceedings, not to delay the verdict.

When Maj Gen Manzoor was killed in 1981, Ershad was the chief of army staff who took over state power through a military coup a few days later.

Manzoor's brother Abul Mansoor Ahmed filed the murder case with the Panchlaish police station in Chittagong in 1995.

Apart from Ershad, four other discharged and retired army officers feature in the list of the accused. ●



Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad arrives at a special court to attend the trial of Gen Manzoor murder case as an accused yesterday

DHAKA TRIBUNE

## Barisal Jubo League man killed in 'gunfight' with RAB

Our Correspondent, Barisal

Faruk Ahmed alias Panama Faruk, an activist of Jubo League, was killed yesterday in an alleged "gunfight" with the Rapid Action Battalion at Barisal city's Chawk Bazar area.

Captain Abul Bashar, officer (operation) of RAB-8, said the elite force had intensified security and set up check posts at different points of the city, after a detective branch constable was injured by miscreants at the Rupatali check post on Sunday.

Early yesterday morning, the RAB team at the check post in Chawker Pol area, commanded by Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) of RAB-8 Nazir Hossain Faruki, tried to stop an approaching group of young men to carry out a search.

The young men, however, allegedly opened fire on the law enforcers and both sides engaged in a "gunfight" at about 6:15am.

The miscreants managed to flee, but left a body at the scene that was later identified by the locals to be of Panama Faruk, Captain Bashar added.

RAB DAD Faruki received a minor injury after a bullet from the miscreants hit his bullet-proof jacket, while the microbus that carried the RAB forces was also hit, said Lt Com Gulzar, who is in charge of RAB-8 media wing.

RAB recovered two pistols, one sawed-off shotgun, one pipe gun, two loaded pistol magazines, three sharp weapons, and a large number of cartridges and bullets, Lt Com Gulzar added.

Kotwali police station Officer-in-

Charge Shakhawat Hossain said Faruk Ahmed alias Panama Faruk was a listed top criminal, accused in more than a dozen cases of murder, extortion, grabbing public and private properties and other criminal activities.

An autopsy was carried out on Faruk's body at the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, before it was handed over to his family.

Faruk's father Yaqub Ali, 70, said he spoke to his son on the phone at around 6:10am yesterday after Faruk, accompanied by his friends, had arrived at Barisal from Dhaka on a launch. Later at 6:25am, Monir, a friend of Faruk, phoned Yaqub and said he had managed to flee after the RAB had nabbed Faruk.

The father demanded justice for the death of his son without any trial.

Drawing his alias from his family-owned business called Panama Traders at the city's Bazar Road area, Faruk Ahmed became notorious as "Panama Faruk" in 1998, according to police record.

Police said Faruk, along with his brother Mahbubur Rahman Chhokku, formed the criminal gang Panama Bahini and created a reign of terror in the city under the banner of Jubo League, as well as carrying out an attack at Barisal Press Club in 1999.

The brothers went into hiding after the BNP-led alliance came to power in 2001, but Faruk returned from India after the AL-led government came to power in 2008 and managed bails from the court in most of the cases against him. ●

## NU teacher indicted for defaming PM's family

Court Correspondent

A National University teacher has been indicted in a defamation case on charge of making derogatory comments about the prime minister and her family.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-or-Rashid yesterday took the charges into cognisance against AKM Wahiduzzaman, the NU teacher of geography, rejecting a discharge petition.

If proved guilty, Wahiduzzaman may get simple or rigorous imprisonment for up to seven years or fined.

On August 22 last year, he allegedly made the remarks about PM Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and

daughter Saima Wazed Putul.

On October 8, AB Siddiqui, president of a pro-Awami League organisation, lodged the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, which issued a warrant for Wahid's arrest. Three days later, he secured a month's bail from the High Court.

According to the case, on his Facebook page Wahid made oblique remarks on Joy who, he said, was a graduate in public administration but claimed himself to be an IT specialist.

Wahid was also sarcastic about Putul's works with autistic children and the honorary doctorate degrees of Hasina. ●

## Decision on trial of Yusuf likely tomorrow

Udisa Islam

The future of the trial against war crimes accused Jamaat-e-Islami leader AKM Yusuf, who died on Sunday, may be decided tomorrow when the International Crimes Tribunal 2 is set to begin hearing the prosecution's closing arguments.

The prosecution and the defence placed their witnesses. Although the case has to be stopped for his death, the tribunal is likely to give an order on the trial.

Defence counsel Gazi MH Tamim yesterday told the Dhaka Tribune: "We have nothing to do now. The prosecution may appeal for a decision."

Yusuf, 87, faced 13 charges of crimes against humanity.

The senior nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat was indicted on August 1 last year for the crimes he had committed in Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira areas during the 1971 Liberation War.

Prosecutor Tureen Afroz said: "The order will include some observations on the case."

Referring to the trial of Slobodan Milosevic, she said the court could give a closing order by recording the procedural history and its findings. ●

## UPAZILA POLLS

## AL, BNP's last-ditch effort for single candidate comes into equation

Tribune Report

Efforts of both Awami League and BNP to pick single candidates for the upcoming upazila polls have been marked by the expulsion of rebel candidates and bargains with the political dissenters.

In Natore, Singra Awami League expelled its joint secretary Zahedul Islam Vola and Anjuman ara who opted to contest the poll as chairman and female vice-chairman, ignoring the party decision, while the BNP declared single candidates as five of its contestants agreed to withdraw their nomination papers.

In Chandpur, the BNP-led 19-party alliance at a press conference declared 13 single candidates' names for five upazilas. None of their allies were present at the conference.

All nominated candidates were from the key component of BNP. The party failed to declare two candidates' names as they were undecided, reports our correspondent.

Meanwhile, a distance between the

local BNP and Jamaat in Kustia has surfaced over selecting candidates.

Apparently, Jamaat has become disappointed as the BNP nominated its own candidates in all three upazilas under the district.

Party leaders said Mirpur upazila Jamaat Ameer Abdul Gafur was elected upazila chairman in the last election as the BNP-led 18-party candidate.

As the Islamist party has a huge vote bank in the upazila, Jamaat requested the BNP to further nominate Gafur, but the BNP turned down the request.

Jamaat decided to contest the poll separately after the decision. It will do the same in Sadar upazila.

In Kumarkhali upazila, Jamaat supported the BNP chairman candidate, but it denied doing so for the vice-chairman and the female vice-chairman candidates.

In Rajbari, two Awami League rebel candidates were removed from their executive posts in Baliakandi upazila of the district as they defied the order of the party high command.

## Khoka denied bail, Mosharraf granted

Md Sanaul Islam Tipu and Nazmus Sakib

A Dhaka court yesterday denied bail to BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka in three cases filed in connection with hartal violence and skirmishes in Dhaka during a Hefazat-e-Islam gathering.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Jahurul Haque passed the order after hearing on the bail petitions in the cases, which also include charges of obstructing police, vandalism and arson attacks during the then BNP-led oppo-

sition-enforced hartals.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday granted six week's anticipatory bail to BNP Standing Committee member Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain in a money laundering case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Zafar Ahmed passed the order.

On Thursday, the ACC registered the case against Mosharraf, alleging that he had siphoned off approximately Tk8 lakh to the UK during his tenure as the health minister between 2001-2006. ●

## Tazreen owner Delwar denied bail, wife Mahmuda granted

Md Sanaul Islam Tipu

A Dhaka Court yesterday denied bail to Tazreen Fashions Managing Director Delwar Hossain, who had been on the run since the 2012 devastating factory fire that killed at least 111 workers.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate's court of Dhaka, however, granted one month's conditional bail to Delwar's wife Mahmuda Akter Mita, chairman of the company, on consideration that she had an ailing child.

The Tazreen boss and his wife surrendered on Sunday and were sent to jail after the court scrapped their bail pleas.

Yesterday, Mahmuda was awarded bail upon signing a Tk20,000 bond.

Earlier yesterday, defence lawyer ATM Golam Gous filed reconsideration bail petitions for both Delwar and Mahmuda.

In the petition, Mahmuda said she was just a housewife and one of her three kids was sick. She also said she was just a shareholder of the company and had nothing to do with the operations of Tazreen Fashions.

She claimed that she was only a victim of circumstances saying none of the witnesses mentioned her name.

Public prosecutor Anowarul Kabir Babul opposed the bail plea saying Delwar and Mahmuda were the prime accused in the case and since the incident was a result of their negligence, none of them should be granted bail.

On December 31, 2013, a Dhaka Court issued arrest warrants against six fugitive accused, including Delwar and Mahmuda, a year after the tragic deaths of over 111 workers in the fire.

Investigation Officer AKM Mohosin Uz-zaman Khan, also a CID inspector, pressed charges on December 22. The prosecution named 104 witnesses in the case.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Wasim Sheikh issued the warrants after taking the charge sheet against 13 people into cognisance.

The court also ordered the investigator and the police station concerned to submit a report by February 25 on the progress made in arresting the fugitive accused. ●

**সিয়াম**  
চার বছরে পা দিয়েছে আজ

আমাদের ছেলে সিয়াম। চার বছরে পা দিয়েছে আজ। আমাদের কাছে এটা-ওটা কত বায়না ওর! সবকিছুই আমাদের কাছে বলে। কিন্তু কয়েক দিন ধরে ওর যেন কী হয়েছে। আমাদের বলছে না। মা জিজ্ঞেস করতেই বলে, বাবা জানে। বাবা জিজ্ঞেস করলে বলে, মা জানে। এ তো মহা দুশ্চিন্তার কারণ!

হঠাৎ গতকাল রাতে দেয়ালে টাঙানো ক্যালেন্ডারের দিকে তাকে একদৃষ্টিতে তাকিয়ে থাকতে দেখি। বিশ্বয়ভরা দৃষ্টি নিয়ে আমাদের বলছে, "তোমরা বলো তো এটা কী মাস?" আমি বললাম, এটা তো ফেব্রুয়ারি...।

ওর মা হঠাৎ চোঁচিয়ে বলে, "আরে আজ তো **সিয়ামের জন্মদিন**" দুজনে মিলে জড়িয়ে ধরলাম ওকে। অভিমানে ঠোটফোলা ছেলেকে আদরে ভাসিয়ে দিলাম।

তোমার জন্মদিনে আশীর্বাদ করি... বাবা...  
দীর্ঘজীবী হও সবার কল্যান করো।



# CAB: Medicine price hike 'abnormal'

Fake medicines also flooding markets, worrying patients

Mohammad Atiqur Rahman

Prices of common medicines have increased by 10-15% in the last six months and those including foreign medicines for gastric, cancer, asthma-related problems, by 20%.

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) terms the rise “abnormal.” The findings, found in an independent study, were revealed yesterday at a press conference. The CAB members also formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club protesting the price hike.

CAB General Secretary Md Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan at the human chain said: “At some places, local drug syndicates have strictly asked the stores to charge the retail price of medicines from the consumers, and if some stores violate the rule by charging less, they are being fined and sometimes medicines are not supplied as a form of punishment.”

Speakers at the programme alleged that marketing and sales of fake and spurious medicines were taking place unabatedly. They demanded the sale of original medicines at affordable prices.

Humayun alleged that several medicine companies had been supplying products in cities, rural areas and abroad with different ingredients for each place,

“but the price remains the same.”

Moreover, medical representatives of drug companies convince doctors to prescribe the patients spurious and unnecessary medicines.

“There should be a law to put an end to the doctors’ practice of prescribing unnecessary and fake medicines. The marketing of spurious and fake medicines must also be banned.”

Through the statement, the CAB has proposed some recommendations to solve the existing problems regarding medicine supplies. It has urged the authorities concerned to form a supervision cell in order to prevent spurious and fake medicines, to display medicine prices in a list at drug stores, to stop selling medicines without doctor’s prescription, and to work accordingly with the court order.

The statement also claimed that though the health ministry in 2009 was asked to take actions against 62 medicine companies by the parliamentary standing committee for ministry of health and family welfare, “there has been no development since then.”

The CAB yesterday also submitted a memorandum to Md Eyahya, assistant director of the Directorate General of Drug Administration under the health ministry. ●



A team from the Dhaka South City Corporation evicts illegal structures at the capital's Gulistan yesterday

DHAKA TRIBUNE

## 19 newspapers implement 8th Wage Board

Tribune Report

A total of 19 newspapers have implemented the Eighth Wage Board till now, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu told parliament yesterday.

The minister stated the information in response to a question of Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Maidul Islam.

Inu said the execution of the wage board was a continuous process and the government had formed a monitoring team comprising government representatives, newspaper owners and employees.

According to the minister, from Dhaka - Daily Ittefaq, Banik Barta, Prothom Alo, Financial Express, Bangladesh Today, News Today, Daily Star, New Age, New Nation, Independent, Daily Sun, Kaler Kantho, Shamokal, Amader Shomoy, Bartaman, Amar Sangbad and Dhaka Tribune have implemented the wage board. On district level, Sadesh Sangbad from Mymensingh and Bahar Sangbad from Rangpur have implemented the eighth wage board. ●

WEATHER

Weather likely to remain unchanged

UNB

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of light rain or thundershowers at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions until 6pm today.

Light to moderate fog might occur over the river basins of the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may fall slightly over northern part of the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:51pm today and rises at 6:34am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 30.1 degrees Celsius was recorded in Rangamati and lowest 13.5 degrees in Ishwardi yesterday.

Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities yesterday were:

City	High	Low
Dhaka	28.0	17.5
Chittagong	28.6	21.0
Rajshahi	26.0	14.0
Rangpur	25.4	14.0
Khulna	30.0	17.5
Barisal	28.0	21.0
Sylhet	26.2	16.2
Cox's Bazar	29.7	20.5

PRAYER TIMES

Fajar	5:18am
Sunrise	6:34am
Zohr	12:13pm
Asr	4:15pm
Magrib	5:51pm
Esha	7:08pm

Source: IslamicFinder.org

## No action yet against 29 companies for producing fake drugs identified by an experts' body

Moniruzzaman Uzzal

The health ministry is yet to take any action against the 29 pharmaceutical companies whose drugs have been identified as “high risk to public health” by a drug inspection team.

The five-member team after inspecting 73 pharmaceutical companies submitted its report before the parliamentary standing committee on the health ministry.

The parliamentary body formed the experts team following the death of at least 24 children after taking paracetamol syrup of the Rid Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The pool of experts submitted its first inspection report in 2010 when 62 companies were identified as producers of fake medicines. It visited the 73 companies for a second time.

The committee comprised Prof ABM Faruque, Prof Khitish Chandra, Prof Anwarul Islam and Prof Shawkat of Dhaka University, and Prof Shahabuddin Kabir Chowdhury of Jahangirnagar University.

They identified 29 companies as manufacturers of drugs that are high risk to public health.

The companies are Oyster Pharma Ltd of Dhaka, Royal Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Chittagong, Aztek Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Chuadanga, Bengal Techno Pharma Ltd of Dinajpur, Bristol Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Gazipur, Indo-Bangla Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Barisal, Enova Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Mirpur, Oyasis Laboratories of Sirajgonj, Pharmic Laboratories of Khulna, Rasha Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Sirajgonj, Remo Chemicals of Tejgaon, Standard Laboratories Ltd of Chittagong, Universal

Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Pabna, Ablation Laboratories of Mirpur, Bikolpo Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Mirpur, Dolphin Pharmaceuticals Ltd of North Jatrobari, Jalfa Laboratories Ltd of Sylhet, Milat Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Postogola, National Laboratories of Narayanganj, North Bengal Laboratories of Naogaon, Paradise Pharma Ltd of Barisal, Quality Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Kustia, Spark Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Mymensingh, Sunipun Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Savar, Tropical Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Shamoli, Unique Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Keraniganj, Avert Pharma Ltd of Savar, Belsen Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Faridpur and Save Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Mymensingh.

The report mentioned that these companies did not comply with the WHO guidelines.

Remedy Pharmaceuticals, As-tra

Biopharmaceuticals and Shamshul Alam Pharmaceuticals had been advised to continue production of drugs except penicillin, sefalosporin, antibiotics and steroids.

Another 26 pharmaceuticals companies were told to continue production by following instructions of the expert team but were barred from producing penicillin, sefalosporin, antibiotics and steroids.

The FNF Pharmaceuticals was asked to suspend production of human drugs but continue manufacturing drugs and vaccines for animals.

Seventeen companies were found closed while the team went on the inspection.

Prof ABM Faruque of the team told the Dhaka Tribune: “In 2010, we visited these companies and cautioned them about maintaining standard.” ●

## Indigenous people want separate Land Commission

Our Correspondent, Sylhet

The indigenous people had been facing continuous eviction from their own lands, and a separate land commission is needed for those living in plain land.

Addressing a press briefing at the Sylhet Press Club yesterday, Gourango Patro, chief of Patro Somproday Kollan Parishad (PSKP) made the comment.

The PSKP is a platform that works for the indigenous people of Sylhet, mainly for the Patro community.

The indigenous communities in Bangladesh in both hilly and land areas, which had been facing oppression, depression and eviction from their own land.

At the press briefing, the speakers said the indigenous people were facing many complexities and conflicts with land issues, adding that land grabbers were trying to evict them by forged land papers. ●

## 3 storywriters win trip to Disneyland

Tribune Report

The winners of “Surf Excel-Daag Theke Darun Golpo” bagged attractive prizes on Friday including trips to the Disneyland Hong Kong.

Unilever Bangladesh's premier brand of detergent Surf Excel launched a nationwide story writing competition called “Surf Excel-Daag Theke Darun Golpo” with an objective to promote the idea that wonderful stories can come out of stains.

Out of 15,000 submissions from all over the country, the awards for best stories went to Dilip Das from Narayanganj, and Rahela Sharmin and Asfia Azim from Dhaka.

Each of the three winners was awarded with a trip to Disneyland Hong Kong along with their families, according to a press release.

The judges of the contest, noted author Anisul Haque and writer, cartoonist Ahsan Habib handed over the prizes at the Spectra Convention Center in the capital on Friday.

The seven other winners, Marifun Nihar from Bagerhat and Shila Parveen



Ahsan Habib and Anisul Haque handover the prize to a winner of Surf Excel-Daag Theke Darun Golpo in the capital on Friday

DHAKA TRIBUNE

Suma from Gazipur won one galaxy tab each, Imran Al Amin, Md Ohabul Islam Khandker and Sharat Whamia Nobobi from Dhaka each won one washing machine, and Shahana Akter and Enamul Haque from Dhaka

won free supplies of Surf Excel for a year.

The top ten stories are being published consecutively every week in daily Prothom Alo's Friday supplement Gollachhut. ●

## ACC to serve notice to Rana's father soon

Syed Samiul Basher Anik

An official of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has said that the commission will serve a notice to Abdul Khaleque, father of collapsed Rana Plaza owner Sohel Rana, within a day or two asking him to submit his wealth statement.

“Although the commission took the decision to serve notices to Sohel Rana and his father Abdul Khaleque for their wealth statements eight months back, the ACC could not do so due to legal complications,” the official added.

“We had not sent the notices to them since they [Sohel Rana and his father Abdul Khaleque] were in jail. Under ACC regulations, it is not lawful to serve notice to anyone who is in jail,” he said, adding that a notice has already been served to Rana's mother Morjina Begum.

“Since Khaleque is now on bail, a commission meeting has approved the notice to be served against him. The notice would be served within a day or

two,” he said.

On September 12 last year, the High Court granted an interim bail to Abdul Khaleque in one of the two cases filed against him over the Rana Plaza building collapse on April 24.

Earlier on May 23, a probe team submitted a primary inquiry report to the ACC, which said Sohel Rana owns 23 bank accounts, two brick fields and two commercial towers and land plots in Savar. Rana also owns an oil mill named Rana Oil Mill at Savar bus stand.

Rana has personal accounts with Exim Bank, National Bank, Dutch Bangla Bank and BRAC Bank, where he has five loan accounts and one Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR) account worth Tk35 lakh, said the report.

The eight-storey Rana Plaza, which housed five garment factories, claimed 1,135 lives when it collapsed on April 24 last year in Savar. The rescue went on for 20 days, with 2,438 people being rescued from the debris, but relatives of the victims claim that hundreds of victims are still missing. ●

## HC issues rule on ACC for Biman's CBA leaders case

Tribune Report

The High Court yesterday issued a ruling upon the Anti-Corruption Commission as to why it did not take legal action against 17 Collective Bargaining Agent leaders for not appearing before the ACC.

The bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain passed the order upon a writ petition lodged on February 2 by Asaduzzaman Siddique, an SC lawyer.

The HC asked the ACC to explain by

two weeks after a preliminary hearing.

Manzill Murshid, lawyer of the petitioner, said the CBA leaders had refused to appear before the ACC though notices were served to them. The commission did not take steps against them for not appearing on January 26.

The Civil Aviation Secretary, Biman Bangladesh Airlines managing director, ACC chairman, National Board of Revenue chairman, Biman's CBA president and general secretary were made respondents in the plea. ●

## HC orders eviction of human haulers from the south-western highways

Nazmus Sakib

The High Court yesterday ordered the police to evict shallow engine-run human haulers - Nasimon, Karimon and Votvoti - from the highways of 10 southwestern districts within seven days.

The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Habibul Gani passed the order following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Asaduzzaman Siddique.

The court has ordered the deputy in-

spector general (highways) and police superintendents of Jessore, Khulna, Jhenaidah, Magura, Meherpur, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Narail, Kushtia and Chuadanga to execute the order.

It asked the authorities concerned to explain why the Motor Vehicle Ordinance should not be followed in allowing these vehicles on the highways.

The bench also wanted to know why such three-wheelers should not be ordered off the road.

The home secretary, finance secre-

tary, inspector general of police, DIG (highway), Dhaka Metropolitan Police's deputy commissioner (Traffic), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority chairman and SPs of the 10 districts have been asked to reply.

Manzill Murshid pleaded for the petitioner, while Deputy Attorney General Mokleshur Rahman represented the government during the hearing.

Manzill said these types of vehicles operated on the highways illegally, causing deaths and accidents. ●



# Rearing of cattle on busy road

Government fails to take action against Kutubbagh Darbar Sharif's illegal occupation of public spaces.

Abu Hayat Mahmud

After occupying Anwar Park in Farmgate, the authority of Kutubbagh Darbar Sharif have extended their occupation to portion of Manik Mia Avenue to set up cattle sheds, hampering the movement of pedestrians as well as traffic.

Visiting the area yesterday the Dhaka Tribune Correspondent found that the Urs authority has also dug a walkway from Farmgate to the TNT playground to set up bamboo sheds, in which they have started keeping cattle.

The Urs is scheduled to be held from February 11 to 13, but the Urs authority had started making preparations one and half months ago.

Residents of Indara Road, Rajabazar Green Road and Jahanara Garden said

they had to suffer a lot every year because of the gathering, as the authority of Kutubbagh Darbar Sharif grabs a portion of the road to arrange the event.

The Urs is scheduled to be held from February 11 to 13, but the Urs authority had started making preparations over one month ago

Shamim Ahmed, a student of Tejgaon College, said, "Commuters and vehicles cannot move smoothly on the walkway and road, because of the illegal establishments of the 'Darbar Sharif'."

Mursed Alam, a resident of Indira road, said people could not go to Anwar Park because the park is also under the occupation of the Urs authority.

Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's media centre, said he was not aware of the occupation, adding, "The DMP did not give, to my knowledge, any permission for the cattle sheds on the road."

"I will look into matter and take action against the road occupation soon," he said. An employee of Darbar Sharif, who preferred to remain unnamed, said: "We have made tin-sheds to store foods, including rice, pulses, and sacrificial animals for the Urs."

While building a pavilion in the park, the Urs authority claimed they had arranged the function after tak-

ing permission from the DMP, Public Works Department and senior members of the government.

The Dhaka Tribune contacted Md Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan, chief engineer of the PWD, two weeks ago.

He said: "We have given permission for only two days, as per the recommendation of senior politicians."

"We do not know about the long-term programme of Kutubbagh Darbar," Kabir said. "Of course, the month-long programme will damage the beauty of the park. If the Kutubbagh Darbar does not remove the illegal structures, we will file a case against them," he said.

However, the correspondent visited the park yesterday, and found that the PWD is yet to take any action against the park's occupation. ●

# Shamsher Mobin's exemption from duty demanded

Our Correspondent, Sylhet

Local BNP leaders in Sylhet yesterday demanded the exemption of central Vice-Chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury from his duty in Sylhet division and to expel party's central committee member Abdul Kaher Shamim.

Through a written statement at a press conference in Sylhet, general secretary AKM Tareque Kamal of the abolished committee of Sylhet sadar upazila made the demand.

Under the banner of the abolished committee, Tareque read out the statement that also demanded the cancellation of newly made convener committee of Sylhet sadar upazila BNP.

The statement said Abdul Kaher Shamim had intentionally formed the committee after abolishing the previous one, ignoring the opinion of the grass root leaders.

Shamsher Mobin had been selecting

candidates for upazila parishad polls ignoring their opinion and as a result he lost the right to stay in power, the speakers alleged.

The speakers declared to resist the conspirator inside the party and cancellation of the new committee, adding that the demonstration would continue until withdrawal of the new committee.

A new convener committee consisting of 136 members was formed abolishing the previous committee on February 4.

When contacted, Abdul Gaffar, general secretary of Sylhet district unit BNP, said strict actions would be taken against the leaders for going against the party.

Among others, Shahid Ahmed, former acting president of Sadar upazila BNP, and Sona Mia, vice-president of district BNP, were also present at the press conference. ●

# EC to complete all upazila polls by March

Tangail 8 by-poll schedule tomorrow

Mohammad Zakaria

Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hafiz yesterday said the EC would complete all upazila elections by March and announce the fourth-phase poll schedule of around 100 upazilas and the schedule of Tangail 8 by-poll tomorrow.

The commission would hold polls to upazila parishads in five phases instead of six, said a senior EC official.

The official added that the commission at its meeting tomorrow would decide to hold polls to the remaining 179 upazilas in fourth and fifth phases, and fix the number of upazila parishads going to polls in fourth phase.

A proposal in this regard was being made which would be placed at the Wednesday's commission meeting, he said.

The commission will hold polls to 477 upazilas out of 487.

The first-phase poll will be held in 98 of 102 upazilas on February 19 while the second phase in 117 on February 27 and the third phase in 83 on March 15.

In the first phase, polls to four upazilas have been postponed as the Local Government and Rural Development Ministry has decided to re-demarcate Rangpur Sadar, Kaunia, Gangachar and Pirgacha upazila areas.

Earlier, the commission decided to hold the fourth-phase upazila poll on March 25, fifth phase on March 31 and sixth phase on May 3.

The Education Ministry sent a letter to the EC that there would be no objection to holding polls in phases at these dates.

The EC officials said the commission would also hold polls to 50 upazilas in costal and haor areas by March.

The commission is likely to announce the poll schedule of Tangail 8 by-election tomorrow. ●



The vegetables vendors take a ride on the rooftop of a bus at the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday. Although an illegal practice, many buses continue to take passengers on its rooftops risking the lives of both passengers and other commuters

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

# HC questions Moheshkhali coal power plant

Tribune Report

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government seeking explanation why the plan to establish a 1320MW coal-based power plant at Matarbari of Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar should not be scrapped.

It also wanted to know why the plant should not be declared contrary to the constitution.

The bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Khurshid Alam Sarkar passed the order after a preliminary hearing on a writ petition jointly lodged by three citizens of Moheshkhali area.

The power, energy and mineral resources secretary, the environment and forests secretary, the land secretary, the director general of the Department of Environment (DoE), the PDB chairman, the managing director and the secretary of Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited, and four others were asked to reply to the rule by two weeks.

Supreme Court lawyer Shaikh Mohammad Zakir Hossain, assisted by Mirza Al Mahmud and JR Khan Robbin,

contended for the petitioners - Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Abul Hashem and Altaf Hossain - who filed the plea on October 6.

Zakir told the court that the plant would be detrimental to the biodiversity of the area and very harmful for the people.

But Deputy Attorney General Al-Amin Sarker said the DoE had given clearance certificate for the plant as it would not affect the environment rather would help in adding more electricity to the national grid.

Earlier, the DoE gave location clearance for a 1320MW coal-fired power plant at Rampal of Bagerhat, on the bank of Pashur River and within 15 kilometres of the Sundarbans mangrove forest claiming that the environment would not be harmed, a proposition opposed by the conservationists.

Several petitions filed over the Rampal plant were filed with the High Court but were later rejected. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the plant's construction work in October last year which will be built and operated by Indian state power agency. ●

# WB \$535m credit to improve urban services, higher education quality

Tribune Report

World Bank (WB) has pledged to provide \$535 million to Bangladesh to strengthen the delivery of urban services and quality of higher education.

To this effect, an agreement was signed between Bangladesh and the International Development Association (IDA), the WB's concessional lending arm, yesterday.

Of the total credit, \$410 million will be given for the municipal governance and services project, while \$125 million will be provided in additional financing for the ongoing higher education quality enhancement project.

"Bangladesh's vision for becoming

a middle income country is ambitious, but not impossible. To achieve this goal, it will need to boost its competitiveness and grow at an even faster pace than the last decade", said Johannes Zutt, WB country director for Bangladesh.

The new credit has 40 years to maturity, including a 10-year grace period; and carries a service charge of 0.75 percent.

"With nearly one-third of the population living in urban centers, they can become the engine of growth if local urban bodies are able to deliver essential services and make cities livable, and if they have access to quality education that empowers them to lead

productive lives," he added.

The municipal governance and services project aims to improve the municipal governance and basic urban services in the urban local bodies located along growth corridors from Dhaka towards Chittagong, Rangpur, Sylhet, and Mymensingh. The project aims to benefit some 34 lakh people in municipalities across the country, of whom 45% will be women.

Through a demand-driven approach, the project will build roads, water and sanitation systems, markets, bus terminals, and municipal services centers in these districts. Further, the project will strengthen the urban local bodies to able to undertake immediate

response operations in times of major emergencies.

"The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15) has emphasized addressing service delivery deficiency in local urban bodies as well as creating a knowledge society by producing skilled tertiary education graduates," said Economic Relations Division Secretary Mohammad Mejbahuddin.

The additional financing to the ongoing higher education quality enhancement project, which began in 2009, will continue to support enhancement of quality and relevance of higher education. The project has already awarded 194 academic innovation funds to 27 public and two private universities. ●



Chairman of Grameenphone Board and Head of Telenor Asia Sigve Brekke talks to a schoolgirl after inaugurating a free internet initiative at Ali Hossain Girls High School in the capital's Dhanmondi area

DHAKA TRIBUNE

# GP to provide free internet for students

Muhammad Zahidul Islam

Mobile operator Grameenphone is going to provide some 250 schools across the country with 21 hours of free Internet connectivity, as part of its Language Movement Day initiative.

Under the programme, students of selected schools will be able to enjoy the information gateway through a multi-purpose community learning

centre, or 'Gonokendra,' to be set up in each institutions.

The programme was formally launched yesterday by the Chairman of Grameenphone's Board, and Head of Telenor Asia, Sigve Brekke at an inauguration ceremony at Ali Hossain Girls High School at Dhanmondi.

A Grameenphone spokesperson said the prime objective of the campaign is to create equal access to educational

content, news, information and knowledge for all. Earlier, the operator signed an deal with the non-governmental organisation BRAC.

BRAC's Senior Director of Strategy, Communications and Capacity Asif Saleh, Grameenphone's Head of Strategy Erlend Prestgard, and Head of Corporate Communications Tahmeed Azizul Huq, and acting headmaster of the school Sajedul Alam were present. ●

# BNP men to besiege Karnaphuli Gas Company

Tarek Mahmud, Chittagong

BNP Chittagong city unit leaders said they would lay siege to the office of state-owned Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDC), if the ongoing gas crisis across the city was not resolved immediately.

The leaders formed a human chain in front of the Chittagong Press Club and later brought out a rally yesterday

demanding uninterrupted gas supply in the commercial and residential areas of the port city.

They alleged that the government was trying to hold power unlawfully by oppressing BNP leaders and activists instead of ensuring constant supply of gas, water and power.

The BNP leaders termed the ruling party's efforts for development of the port city as "limited to slogans."

Expressing concern, they said several industrial units might be compelled to suspend their operations if such situation continued.

"Even after failing to provide with uninterrupted gas, the KGDC authorities were realising gas bills from consumers regularly," the BNP leaders claimed.

Dr Shahadat Hossain, general secretary, and Abu Sufian, vice president of the city unit BNP, spoke among others. ●



# Brick kilns hurting soil fertility, environment

The Department of Environment doing a little to protect farmland in Lalmonirhat

Our Correspondent, Lalmonirhat

All of the 33 brick kilns are running illegally on the croplands in Lalmonirhat, violating rules of Department of Environment (DoE) and not only hurting local agriculture, but also effecting ecological balance.

Farmers said although they had been protesting against the run of brick fields on croplands over the years, no effective measures have been taken against such harmful acts from the government's end.

Even the DoE did not take action against any errant brick kilns for unknown reasons.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), crops farming on about 3,300 bighas of land which are located adjacent to these brick fields face setbacks every year.

Moreover, production of about 600 fruit-bearing trees, especially jackfruit and mango, have declined drastically since the brick kilns have been running in the district.

Kashem Ali, a farmer at Madonerchak village in Lalmonirhat sadar upazila, said he had been getting low production from his three mango and two jackfruit trees for the last eight years because of black smoke emitted from brick kilns.

"I got expected crops especially paddy production from my two bighas of land, but the production decreased sharply after operation of a brick kiln began at our village eight years ago," said another farmer Abdul Sheikh, who resides at the same village.

"Our school-going children are the worst sufferers of the brick kilns and many of them often fall sick due to the black smoke," said Mamen Uddin, an inhabitant of Dhairkhata village.

Jalal Uddin, owner of J and B brick kiln at Baraipara village under Hatibandha upazila, said he as well as other owners of brick kilns ran their business legally, as they had taken permission from the DoE.

"After visiting the spot several times, the DoE officials had given me permission to run my brick field," he said.

Deputy Director of the DAE, Lal-

monirhat Abdul Mazid acknowledged that brick kilns have been adversely impacting the agriculture sector in the district.

He alleged that the DoE officials never meet with agriculture officials before giving permission to run any brick kiln on cropland.

Coordinator of Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service, Bangladesh (agriculture and environment) Mamunur Rashid said the crops and fruits farming in about half kilometre area surrounding a brick kiln always face impediment because of black smoke.

Farmers do not get expected production and black smoke from the brick kiln pollutes environment, which is also a threat for life of human-being, animals and vegetation, he said.

Senior Chemist of the DoE, Rajshahi division, Quamruzzaman Sarker said they had given permission to run brick kiln after visiting and talking with local people several times. "If any complaint is submitted to us, the DoE must take necessary steps after investigation." ●

# Students attending classes in risky building in Kushtia

Our Correspondent, Kushtia

Some 400 students of Harekrishnapur Government Primary School in the town's Mongalbaria Bazar have to attend classes in a dilapidated building.

According to sources, a portion of the ceiling has loosened and cracks have developed on various parts of the building. The roof can collapse at any given moment.

Some local elites founded the makeshift school in 1936. The makeshift structure was later turned into a building where students have been attending classes for the past 78 years.

Despite some minor renovation work being carried out in 2005, the building in its current form is considered risky.

Locals have alleged that the renovation was not done properly, citing corruption in part of the contractor concerned.

Mina, a student of class I, said: "I always fear that the building can collapse anytime."

Mina's father Kabil Mia said: "We are gripped with panic at the prospect of something tragic occurring there."

Bakul Hossain, father of a class III stu-

dent named Mim, said: "It is unbelievable that a government primary school has been lying in such a sorry state."

Arifa Sharmin, the school's headmistress said: "An engineer from Education Engineering Department declared the school building abandoned."

A portion of the ceiling has loosened and cracks have developed on various parts of the building. The roof can collapse at any given moment

"With no alternative arrangements left, we have to conduct all academic activities inside the building at great risk," she said.

"No steps were taken despite the authorities being informed of the matter," she added.

Locals, teachers and students demanded immediate and effective steps being taken towards the building's renovation. ●

# Seven held with arms in Madaripur

Our Correspondent, Madaripur

The Detective Branch of police arrested seven while they were attempting a robbery and recovered sharp weapons from their possession in Nilkhi upazila, Madaripur on Sunday.

The detainees are Al Amin, 22, Kawser Farazi, 28, Ilias Ali, 28, Razzak, 25, Robiul Islam, 18, Roman Bepari, 26, and Humayun Kabir, 32.

Police recovered two screwdrivers, one syringe, five small knives, one machete, two crowbars and two large knives from their possession.

Locals said they informed police after noticing 10-12 unknown youths roaming the area on Sunday night.

The police complied and visited the place, detaining the seven in question from a field owned by one Sarkar Mahmud's while they were attempting a robbery there.

Some of the miscreants managed to escape the scene, Sub-Inspector of Madaripur DB Mobarak Hossain said.

"The detainees are associated with a larger group of robbers and drug peddlers.

Two cases were filed for attempted robbery and possession of weapons," he said. ●

# AL leader defies court order to build jetty at Meghna launch terminal

Our Correspondent, Brahmanbaria

Ashuganj upazila Awami League President Shafiullah Mia, is alleged to have been building jetty at a launch terminal on the Meghna River, ignoring a court order.

An investigation found that the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) had leased out the launch terminal to Md Mesbah Uddin, but Shafiullah Mia is using his political clout to undertake illegal construction projects at the terminal, to satisfy his business interests.

The construction work has hindered the transportation of goods through the landing station, said Md Mesbah Uddin, the lessee.

He added that a Brahmanbaria court had issued a stay on further construction.

Shafiullah Mia claimed that the consultation firm, Conveyor Logistic Ltd, advised him to build the jetty to facilitate the transportation of goods.

"I also talked to rice traders about this matter," he said.

Refuting the allegations against him, Safiullah said: "The jetty is being constructed for temporary purposes."

Managing Director of Conveyor Logistic Ltd Md Kabir Ahmed refused to talk over phone about this matter.

Dewan Aminul Islam an accountant from the company's procurement department said, "We made an application to the BIWTC to use the landing station. I am not sure whether the permission was given by the authorities concerned."

Deputy Director of Ashuganj BIWTC Md Alamgir Kabir, said he did not know whether the authorities had given permission to construct the jetty. ●



A local Awami League leader has built a jetty at launch terminal on the Meghna river, ignoring a court order

DHAKA TRIBUNE

# Three months passed, police yet to arrest rapist of schoolgirl

Our Correspondent, Hobiganj

Even after three months into the incident, police have yet to arrest the rapist and killer of a schoolgirl in Madhabpur upazila of Hobiganj.

Moreover, the criminals have been issuing threats to victim's family to withdraw the case.

Victim's family said rapist's family was threatening them and putting pressure on them to withdraw the case

The deceased's mother Sheikh Hazera Khatun made the allegation while reading out a written statement at a press conference held at Hobiganj Press Club on Sunday evening.

Holding the picture of her daughter, she expressed hope that the culprit would get punishment one day.

She said neighbour Asibul Islam Shanto forcefully entered into her daughter's room and raped her on November 9, last year.

While the victim screamed, Shanto

strangled her and hanged the body from a ceiling so that it looked like a suicide.

Then, Shanto's family pressured the victim's family to bury the body immediately.

Hazera filed a case against eight people accusing Shanto as main culprit with the local police station on November 28 last.

After a court's order, the body was exhumed from the graveyard and taken to Hobiganj morgue for autopsy with the presence of Executive Magistrate Ariful Islam on December 26.

The culprits have been roaming around in broad daylight with impunity, she said, adding that Shanto's father Jolfu Shah has been threatening them and also verbally abusing them.

She said Jolfu had claimed that he had managed Doctor Mohsin Karim of Hobiganj Sadar Hospital and other staffs so that they would change the autopsy report.

Breaking down into tears, she expressed concern over getting justice in this matter. She demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

She said the higher authorities should take measures to save her family from the culprits. Victim's father Shamsul Islam and brother were also present at the press conference. ●

# Workers block road for due salaries

Our correspondent, Noakhali

Hundreds of agitated factory workers put up barricade on the Majidee Bajar Rajgonj road in Noakhali for an hour, protesting the delay in payment of their salaries which have been due for last eight months.

The factory staff clashed with the agitated workers that left six workers injured.

The injured workers are Abdur Rahim, Mobarok Hossain, Shamsu, Israfil, Ajahar and Towfiq, who were admitted to different clinics.

Two workers of the Al-Amin Bread and Biscuit factory Najmun Nahar and Abdur Rahim said the factory management had summoned the workers to draw their eight-month due salaries yesterday.

The workers had gathered on the factory premises.

However, after waiting for one hour no response came from the factory authorities, the workers became furious and took to the street.

At one point the workers became angry and started protesting. Rocky, the security guard of factory owner Md Anwar Mirza, with the help of outsiders, started beating up the workers, said the two workers.

They added that the factory authority had closed down the factory six months ago without giving any prior notice.

Upon receiving information, police went to the spot and brought the situation under control after three hours.

Contacted, the factory authorities denied to talk about the matter. ●

# 20 hurt in Pabna clash over possessing water body

Our Correspondent, Pabna

At least 20 people were injured as landless people of two villages clashed over possessing a water body in Shorgram village under Ataikula police station in Pabna yesterday morning.

Quoting locals, police said the landless

people of Shorgram and Horipur village had a long-standing dispute as they had been trying to occupy 19 bighas of government's water body at Haripur village of the district. Villagers of both villages were locked into the clash with lethal weapons in the morning that left 20 people of both groups injured. ●

## AFFIDAVIT

FARJANA AHAMED, Wife of Pervez Ahamed & Father's Name- Mohammad Ali Hossain, Mother's Name- Hosne Ara Begum, Date of birth 27-10-1993 of Village- Rugunathpur, P.O. Bhuiagar, P.S. Fatulla, Dist- Narayanganj, Bangladesh, by faith Muslim, by profession Student, by Nationality Bangladeshi, do hereby solemnly affirm and edclares as follows: That I am permanent resident and citizen of Bangladesh by birth. That before marriage my Name was FARJANA AKTER PINKY, by after marriage adopted FARJANA AHAMED, after the name of my husband. That henceforth, I will be known and identified myself as FARJANA AHAMED for all purpose. I swear and sing this affidavit before the Notary Public, Narayanganj, Bangladesh. this the 30th day of January, 2014. **FARJANA AHAMED**

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
District: Sherpur

Memo No. LGED/XEN/Sher/2014/187  
Date: 09/02/2014

## e-Tender Notice

Invitation For Tender No: 18/e-GP/2013-14

e-Tender is invited the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Construction (a) Boundary wall, (b) Internal road, (c) Drainage System, (d) Rain Water harvesting, (e) Bandhu Barner, (f) Sub-station with Generator Room & (g) Site Development under Upazila: Sherpur Sadar, District: Sherpur.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted

To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 18-03-2014, 16.00.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).



(Md. Sharif Hossain)  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Sherpur.  
Ph: 0931-61430



# For a safer home

A rationale of the need for the Prevention of Communal Violence Bill in Bangladesh



The post-election spate of violence towards the minority communities have left many such homes in ruins, lives in tatters

DHAKA TRIBUNE

Farzana Begum

Violence on religious minorities happens in Bangladesh whenever there is a change in politics, after any major political incident, or is influenced by international or regional communal events. In the last three years a lot of minority women were raped, hundreds of minorities were injured and thousands of houses, pagodas and monasteries were vandalised and destroyed. Many of them have migrated to neighbouring countries to have a safe life.

### Incidents of such violence over the last three years

**2012** The Ramu violence was a series of attacks on Buddhist monasteries, shrines, and houses of Buddhist inhabitants in Ramu upazila in Cox's Bazar district by local Muslim mobs in September 2012.

businesses, vandalised their temples and set them on fire. According to community leaders, more than 50 Hindu temples and 1,500 Hindu homes were destroyed in 20 districts.

**2014** Before and after the election of 2014 at least eight unions in different upazilas of Dinajpur district were the worst sufferers of such targeted violence. In Jessore, the miscreants vandalised at least 46 Hindu houses and establishments and torched six others, alleging that the minority people had voted for the Awami League.

In Thakurgaon, the Jamaat-led terrorists unleashed violence on the religious minorities; they went on a rampage, damaging and looting 65 houses and 30 shops and setting afire paddies stored on courtyards in several homes.

In western Satkhira, a traditional Jamaat stronghold, Jamaat-BNP men resorted to attacks with sharp weapons, sticks and iron rods.

About 700 elderly and young women, men and children of Malopara took shelter at Deyapara village across the Bhairab river. About 100 houses of Hindus were vandalised and torched.

Activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, carried out the massive destruction for two hours in the Hindu village for "violating" their order of not to go to the polling booth.

About 1,200 people from Hindu families of Gopalpur village took shelter at a temple. In Dinajpur, at least 350 houses and 50 shops in five villages were damaged, set ablaze and looted.

According to the locals, around 2,000 Jamaat-Shibir men, armed with sharp weapons and sticks, launched the attack on Kornai village. Several hundred men, women and children fled their homes.

In Chittagong, Hindus were under threat following attacks on poll night in Satkania, Lohagara and Banskhali upazilas, considered a stronghold of the Jamaat-Shibir.

In Lohagara, Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised and looted several shops owned by Hindus at Hindur Haat. On January 21 in Rupgang, Narayangang four Hindu temples and houses were attacked and vandalised.

### What's in the Constitution

Whenever such things occur, it is the Constitutional right of every citizen, no matter how numerically weak or disadvantaged, to expect equal protection from an impartial and just State. Article 2 (A) of the Constitution

of Bangladesh states that "the state religion of the Republic is Islam, but the State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions.

Article 27 ensures that all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. Whereas Article 19 (1) ensures equality of opportunity - "the State shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens." Under Article 28 (1) "the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth."

Fundamental principles of state's policy are given in Article 8 (1). It says that the principles of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism, together with the principles derived from those as set out in this Part, shall constitute the fundamental principles of state policy.

Article 8 (2) says "the principles set out in this part shall be fundamental to the governance of Bangladesh, shall be applied by the State in the making of laws, shall be a guide to the interpretation of the Constitution and of the other laws of Bangladesh, and shall form the basis of the work of the State and of its citizens, but shall not be judicially enforceable."

Article 12 guarantees secularism and freedom of religion. The principle of secularism shall be realised by the elimination of:

- a. communalism in all its forms;
- b. the granting by the State of political status in favour of any religion;
- c. the abuse of religion for political purposes;
- d. any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practicing a particular religion.

Most importantly Article 41 (1) says that, subject to law, public order and morality:

- a. every citizen has the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion;
- b. every religious community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.

Article 41 (2) says: "No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or to take part in or to attend any religious ceremony or worship, if that instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own."

### Who are religious minorities

The non-dominant religious minorities in any area of Bangladesh who have, in recent years, come under attack

because of their identity in different locality and where the State machinery has acted prejudicially, would include Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and Ahmedians.

### Who are the perpetrators

The perpetrator of violence could be any person, belonging to any region, language, caste or religion. The participants of communal violence varies from silent supporters to those actively involved in orchestrating violence, i.e. killing, maiming, sexually assaulting, vandalising, torching, threatening, rumour-mongering and taking part in looting the properties and shops owned by the members of the victimised community.

It is well accepted that most of the communal violence are pre-planned rather than spontaneous. Mostly they are the leaders of communal outfits who produce, refine and propagate the ideology, political thoughts and uses violence as a tool in their roadmap to achieve their social, political, economic and hegemonic ideals.

### The rationale

The attacks are frequently connected to political agendas, and fuelled by few biased and religiously motivated media. Almost every minority religious community is a victim of violence somewhere in Bangladesh, and the scale of the problem can seem insurmountable.

Communal and targeted violence spreads mainly because the public officials charged with protecting and preventing, either fail to act or act in a biased manner. Media covers the violence, generating temporary interest, and then it is business as usual, except the victims, minorities and a very small section who affirm secular governance and stand up for human rights.

The policy of amnesia about communal and targeted violence and the victims even leads to a greater violence with higher number of death, injury, rape and vandalism for longer duration.

Such acts of violence are considered a tragedy for a modern democracy. I feel that we need effective laws to tackle communal violence that ensure accountability of the government and law enforcement agencies who are mandated with maintenance of law and order, ensure effective prosecution of the perpetrators of communal violence and reparations for victims of violence as a matter of their right.

Hence there is a need to introduce the Prevention of Communal Violence

Bill to restore equality in the working of the law for non-dominant groups in every corner of Bangladesh.

This bill will provide correction of institutional bias against groups, particularly towards the vulnerable ones, in any area or locality, thus giving all citizens, no matter how small their numbers or where they choose to be domiciled, an equal playing field in enjoying their full measure of rights as citizens. This will be a special provision bill, for the non-dominant groups, being the religious minorities in the unit of the land.

The Prevention of Communal Violence Bill should be intended to enhance state accountability and correct discriminatory exercise of state powers in the context of identity-based violence, and thus restore equal access to the law for religious minorities.

We have to keep in mind that the bill would not seek to give additional powers to the state. This is because the administration and justice delivery system already has adequate powers to prevent and control communal and targeted violence when it chooses to do so.

The bill is neither intended to discriminate nor offend the majority. There should be a balance of power between the dominant group and the minority group and the bill should not be seen as discriminatory to no one.

I strongly recommend that the bill must address the following issues amongst others:

1. Defining communal and targeted violence
2. Hate propaganda
3. Offences of communal violence
4. Responsibilities of public servants
5. Constituting authority for communal harmony
6. Rights of the victims
7. Compensation and remedy for the victims

Much attention and work is needed to prevent and combat violence and bring about justice, peace, and reconciliation. We cannot just stay silent in the face of such horrific acts.

Together, if we understand the complexity, scale and gravity of violence against religious minorities, we could make a step forward to overcome it.

By introducing the Prevention of Communal Violence Bill we can go ahead together to make this country a safe place for all, regardless of religious identity. ●

Farzana Begum is Executive Director of Bangladesh Manobadhikar O Poribesh Andolon and an advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

The policy of amnesia about communal and targeted violence and the victims even leads to a greater violence with higher number of death, injury, rape and vandalism for longer duration



# Hundreds evacuated from Homs in Syria

Agencies

Six hundred people - mostly women, children and the elderly - have been evacuated from the Syrian city of Homs, according to non-governmental organisations.

They were brought out by humanitarian assistance teams on Sunday despite mortar attacks and shooting.

More civilians may be rescued as rebels and the Bashar al-Assad government have extended the ceasefire for another three days.

The evacuation of about 600 of the 3,000 trapped people came as representatives from both sides converged on Geneva, Switzerland, for new peace talks.

Sunday's evacuation was the second after 83 people were brought out on Friday - the first day of the truce.

The Syrian Red Crescent said on Facebook "around 600 people evacuated today, registration is still ongoing. We managed to get 60 food parcels & 1500Kg of flour inside old city."

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 611 were brought out - "210 women, 180 children, 91 men over 55 years old and 130 young men who surrendered to Syrian authorities under UN supervision."

Television footage showed women, children and elderly men getting off the evacuation buses.

They appeared visibly exhausted and frail, in a video broadcast by the Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen TV channel.

Homs, much of which has been reduced to rubble, was dubbed "the capital of the revolution" by activists before an offensive in 2012 by regime forces recaptured much of the city.

The civilians evacuated from Homs



Policemen gather around buses before the evacuation of civilians from the rebel-held areas of the Syrian city of Homs

AFP

on Sunday were aided by UN staff and Syrian Red Crescent volunteers amid a strong Syrian army presence.

State television said the operation took place under fire from "armed terrorist groups" - regime terminology for rebels. But the Syrian Observatory echoed claims by activists that at least five people were killed in shelling that targeted the besieged Homs district of Qarabis.

Activists accused pro-government fighters in neighbourhoods bordering

the besieged districts who opposed the truce, of firing the mortar rounds.

Shelling also targeted a Homs aid convoy on Saturday in an attack that killed five residents and wounded 20 others, the Syrian Observatory said.

Elsewhere in Syria, at least 25 members of Assad's Alawite sect were killed by fighters in the Maan area of Hama province, the Syrian Observatory said on Sunday.

It said most of the dead were pro-regime fighters, but state television re-

ported a "massacre" of 10 women.

And in the Palestinian camp of Yarmouk in southern Damascus, besieged since last June, a man and a woman died of malnutrition, it said.

Since the blockade began, up to 80 people have died because of food and medical shortages, the Syrian Observatory estimates.

In yet another development, a group of nuns from the historic Christian-majority Syrian town of Maaloula have appeared in a video aired by Al Jazeera. ●

## 17 inmates stab themselves in Georgia prison protest

AFP, Tbilisi

At least 17 prison inmates in Georgia were hospitalised on Monday with self-inflicted stab wounds as a larger protest over alleged mistreatment rocked the ex-Soviet state's penal system, authorities said. The inmates from Geguti penitentiary in western Georgia were treated for "self-inflicted multiple stab wounds in their upper and lower extremities," the Ministry of Correction said, as hundreds more convicts pressed on with a hunger strike.

"The injured inmates received medical treatment and were brought back to the prison in a normal condition. No force was used against them by the prison administration which is fully in control of the situation," a statement from the ministry said.

Some 800 inmates at the prison have been on hunger strike since Friday protesting against alleged abuse by prison guards and demanding proper medical treatment, Georgia's human rights ombudsman Ucha Nanuashvili told journalists. Prisoners' relatives were holding a round-the-clock vigil outside Geguti prison, claiming the authorities were hiding the true scale of the incident, Georgian Imedi TV station reported.

The Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance, Sozar Subari, has denied the allegations of mistreatment, claiming mafia dons were behind the hunger strike. ●

## Turkey, Israel 'close' to deal after deadly flotilla raid

AFP, Ankara

Negotiators are close to striking a long-awaited deal on compensation for Turkish victims of a deadly Israeli raid on a Gaza aid flotilla four years ago, a Turkish official said Monday. The May 2010 Israeli assault on the Turkish ship the Mavi Marmara while it was in international waters sent relations between Israel and Turkey to an all-time low.

Talks on compensation for the nine Turks killed in the raid eventually began in March 2013 after Israel extended a formal apology to Turkey in a breakthrough brokered by US President Barack Obama.

"We are close to an agreement" to settle the compensation issue, a Turkish official told AFP on Monday.

Turkish foreign ministry undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu was in Israel earlier this month to discuss the terms of a agreement, which will help normalise relations between the Jewish state and its once closest Muslim ally.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu acknowledged on Sunday there had been a "momentum" in talks in order to bridge the gaps. ●

# Prosecutor: Congo militia leader ordered rapes, massacres

Reuters

A Congolese militia leader widely known as "the Terminator" ordered troops, including child soldiers, to massacre and rape civilians to spread terror and grab territory, prosecutors told the International Criminal Court on Monday.

The allegations against Bosco Ntaganda were made at the opening of hearings seen as a test for the global legal institution after a string of troubled cases. Ntaganda has yet to enter a plea.

"He played a key role in planning assaults against the civilian population in order to gain territory," said Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, setting out her arguments to judges who will decide if there is enough evidence for Ntaganda to stand trial.

Ntaganda was a senior military commander who should also be punished because he "failed to prevent or punish crimes by troops under his effective command or control," she said.

Ntaganda, an ethnic Hema, is accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes including murder and rape, all allegedly committed during a 2002-03 conflict in the mineral-rich east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The crimes were committed against the Lendu population and other ethnic groups in a bid to drive them out of the



Bosco Ntaganda

AFP

Ituri region over 12 months from September 2002, said the prosecutor.

Ntaganda, a tall, slight man with a pencil-line moustache, rose briefly at the start of the hearing, speaking in his native Kinyarwanda tongue to confirm his identity.

Ntaganda handed himself in to the US embassy in the Rwandan capital Kigali last March after a 15-year career as a commander in a series of rebellions in Congo's Ituri province.

Shortly after his arrival in The Hague, prosecutors asked judges for more time to rebuild a case which had

been dormant for five years while Ntaganda was on the run.

The session will be a test of prosecutor Bensouda's promise last year that cases will be "trial ready" by the time they come to court - an implicit response to criticisms by academics and member states of earlier cases which collapsed when judges ruled evidence was not strong enough.

The court, 11 years old this year, has handed down just one conviction - jailing another Congolese warlord, Thomas Lubanga, for 14 years in 2012 for using child soldiers. ●

# Trade winds spur hiatus in global warming

AFP, Sydney

An unprecedented spike in Pacific trade winds has seen global warming slow significantly in the past 12 years but the effect is only temporary and temperatures will surge, a study found Monday.

The Australian-led report, published in the latest edition of Nature Climate Change, said a dramatic acceleration in equatorial trade winds blowing from the Americas to the West Pacific had boosted circulation of the ocean.

"If the trade winds blow particularly strong that warm water that's piled up there starts to converge in the ocean interior," said lead author Matthew England.

"In a way it's locking away energy we've obtained from greenhouse gas into the subsurface ocean and that's what causes the hiatus (in global warming)."

The study examined a pause in global warming since 2001 along with a previous such stall between 1940-75 and identified a close link to negative phases of the Inter decadal Pacific Oscillation (IPO) - a wind pattern associated with a cool tropical Pacific and strengthened winds.

England said the winds finding helped to explain why global warming didn't occur in a continual upward trajectory - a criticism of climate change sceptics - but "a series of abrupt steps in between periods of more or less steady temperatures."

England said the current plateau in global warming at a time when "greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have

shot up to record levels" had puzzled scientists.

"This pause in surface warming doesn't mean that global warming has stopped at all, we see Arctic sea ice melting to record low levels, the land ice sheets across the world are melting rapidly, ocean temperatures continue to warm," he said.

"So it's not a contradiction of global warming but it has confused scientists, just because we do expect the surface temperatures around the world to progressively warm decade by decade."

England's team, which also included researchers from the United States, looked to the seas for answers and found "there was more than enough heat going into the ocean to account" for the plateau they were seeing.

"The reason the oceans are taking up extra heat, and this is particularly occurring in the Pacific Ocean is that the trade winds have strengthened considerably over the last two decades," he said.

He described their intensification as "unprecedented in the measurement record and way beyond the strength of the trends ever captured by climate models."

But England said the surging trade winds were only temporary and their associated cooling effects would likely reverse sharply once the IPO shifted back to a positive phase "within as little as a decade."

"If the trade winds slow down or stop, what happens is that heat absorption by the ocean reverses and we actually get heat coming back up to the atmosphere," he said. ●

# 51 dead in Burundi flood disaster

AFP, Bujumbura

At least 51 people perished in flooding and landslides in a night of torrential rain in the Burundi capital that swept away hundreds of homes and cut off roads and power, officials said Monday.

Police in Bujumbura said the toll was the highest in living memory from a disaster caused by freak weather, with more than 100 people also injured.

"The rain that fell in torrents overnight on the capital caused a disaster," Security Minister Gabriel Nizigama told reporters.

"We have already found the bodies of 51 people killed when their houses collapsed or were swept away."

Police said several hundred homes were destroyed after torrential rains began battering the city late Sunday.

Houses in the poorer parts of town are often built from mud bricks, which offer no resistance to torrents of water and mud.

"It's the first time in the history of Bujumbura that we have seen damage on this scale," Bujumbura mayor Saidi Juma said, calling for "solidarity on a national and international scale" to help the city cope.

In the district of Kinama in the hardest hit north of the city, a stream broke its banks, with waters rising to shoulder level in some places.

By midday the flooding had subsided,

leaving scenes of devastation.

Zawadi, a mother-of-five, stood in the ruins of her Kinama home, feeding her five-month-old baby surrounded by jerry cans and muddy clothing.

"I heard the children shouting during the night," she said, recounting how she had gone into their room to find them standing up on their bed, which was already under water.

The whole family was able to run outside before the walls caved in, but one neighbouring family was less fortunate, with the parents and their three children crushed to death.

On the western outskirts of Bujumbura, residents told similar stories.

"Around midnight we heard something cracking and we all ran outside for fear the house would fall on us," said Gaudence Nyandwi, whose father Venant was being transferred from an improvised stretcher to a car, his face contorted in pain.

"My father went back inside to see if he could save anything and the house fell on him. We think he might have a broken leg," Nyandwi told AFP.

Nizigama said burials of the victims would begin on Monday because there was not enough space for their bodies in the capital's mortuaries.

He was speaking at a police station in the worst affected northern part of Bujumbura, where an AFP journalist saw 27 bodies covered in white sheeting. ●

# UN nuclear agency sees 'good' progress with Iran

Reuters, Vienna

The UN nuclear watchdog signaled its determination on Monday to get to the bottom of suspicions that Iran may have worked on designing an atomic bomb, a day after Tehran agreed to start addressing the sensitive issue.

Chief UN nuclear inspector Tero Varjoranta said progress had been good during February 8-9 talks in Tehran but that much work remained in clarifying concerns of possible military links to Iran's nuclear program, in an investigation which Western diplomats say Tehran has stonewalled for years.

"There are still a lot of outstanding issues," Varjoranta, deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said at Vienna airport after returning from the Iranian capital. "We will address them all in due course."

Iran denies Western allegations it seeks the capability to make nuclear weapons, saying such claims are baseless and forged by its foes. Years of hostile rhetoric and confrontation have raised fears of a new war in the Middle East.

But a diplomatic push to resolve the

decade-old dispute gained new momentum after last June's election of a relative moderate, Hassan Rouhani, as Iran's president on a platform to ease its international isolation. Iran and six powers agreed late last year on an interim deal to curb Tehran's nuclear work in exchange for some easing of sanctions that have battered the oil producer's economy and they will next week start talks on a long-term agreement.

The IAEA investigation into what it calls the possible military dimensions (PMD) to Iran's nuclear activity is separate from, but closely linked to, wider diplomacy between Tehran and the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China.

The IAEA investigation is focused on the question of whether Iran sought atomic bomb technology in the past and, if it did, to determine whether such work has since stopped.

Diplomats say the way the Iran-IAEA talks progresses will be important also for the outcome of the big powers' diplomacy, which the West hopes will lead to a settlement denying Iran the capability to make a nuclear weapon any time soon. ●

# New round of South Sudan talks to open in Ethiopian capital

AFP, Addis Ababa

South Sudan's government and rebels are to open a new round of peace talks in the Ethiopian capital Monday aimed at ending their nearly two-month-old conflict, negotiators said.

Peace delegates loyal to South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and supporters of rebel leader Riek Machar, a former vice president, signed a ceasefire on January 23 although fighting has continued.

The two sides agreed to meet again for a second phase of negotiations on a political agreement designed to address the root causes of the unrest.

"The second round of the South Sudan negotiations focusing on political dialogue and national reconciliation will officially be launched Monday," IGAD, the regional grouping that is helping mediate the talks, said in a statement.

Seven South Sudanese political figures, who were among 11 arrested in Juba when the fighting broke out in mid-December and who were freed at the end of January, will take part in the

talks, IGAD said.

The other four who were arrested - presented as Machar sympathisers - are still detained in Juba. The government side wants to try them, along with two other political figures - including Machar himself - who are the run.

The detainees had been a major obstacle to progress in the first round, and the fate of the four is set to come up again in the latest talks.

"We are still requesting, or demanding, the release of the remaining detainees," rebel spokesman Yohanis Musa Pouk told AFP.

He said the rebels would also demand that someone other than Kiir should lead the country until elections are held in 2015.

"We should have an independent person that can lead the government until we go to elections. President Kiir is not the right person at this time," he said.

But Pouk also said he was not optimistic about the success of the negotiations "because we know that our government is not serious about the talks."

The military situation in large parts of this vast country largely devoid of

infrastructure remains unclear.

During the two-week break in discussions IGAD said its mediators briefed the heads of state of member countries and sought their advice.

The first IGAD monitors, tasked with checking that the ceasefire is indeed implemented, were also deployed. The ceasefire, however, has already been broken several times.

The conflict, which started in the capital Juba and which spread rapidly to different parts of the country, has left thousands dead since mid-December and has caused close to 900,000 others to flee their homes.

The conflict has also had a tribal dimension, with the two largest ethnic communities, the Dinka, to which Kiir belongs, and Machar's group the Nuer, both carrying out ethnic massacres.

Analysts warned against over-optimism on the talks.

"The negotiations are a stopgap measure at best: the institutional deficiencies that have brought about the violence remain," wrote Peter Biar Ajak, director of the Centre for Strategic Analysis and Research in Juba. ●



# Nepal elects new PM

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's fractious lawmakers elected veteran politician Sushil Koirala as prime minister Monday, with the 75-year-old promising to steer through a long-delayed new constitution for the Himalayan nation within a year.

The silver-haired bachelor easily won a vote in the constituent assembly, which was elected last November in only the second national polls since the end of a civil war in 2006.

Koirala, from the family that dominates Nepal's oldest party the Nepali Congress, won 405 out of 553 votes cast after winning the support of the influential leftist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) at the weekend.

"We will deliver the constitution through agreement, unity and reconciliation," Koirala, who was once jailed over the hijacking of a plane in India, told reporters after the election.

"We would try to include all the parties in the process and would work to safeguard peace and democracy," said the partly Indian-educated politician, wearing his trademark black cap and glasses.

He earlier told the assembly that the impoverished nation would rely on its two giant neighbours, China to the north and India to the south, "as well as other friends to complete our responsibilities."

Since Nepal's first post-war elections in 2008, five prime ministers have served brief terms, the country has had no leader for long periods, and the constituent assembly has been perpetually deadlocked.

The first version of the 601-member body, dominated by the one-time rebel Maoists, finally collapsed in May 2012 after failing to agree on a constitution and complete the peace process.

The Maoists, who traded their guns for politics after signing a pact to end the civil war, have been relegated to a humiliating third place in the new assembly with just 80 seats.

Koirala, who is expected to be sworn in on Wednesday, is the fourth member of his extended family to become prime minister in Nepal's history.

He is charged with trying to unify and rebuild the country, whose economic growth has slid in recent years, forcing hundreds of thousands of Nepalis to migrate overseas for jobs.

"The government under my leadership will promote internal capital and external investment. We will create economic opportunities within our country to end poverty and unemployment," Koirala said in his speech in the assembly.

Leaders from across Nepal's political divide have pledged to draw up the constitution within a year, after the assembly convened for the first time

since the polls last month. Observers say he faces a difficult task.

"Koirala has to address the concerns of more than two dozen parties within the house," Geja Sharma Wagle, a political commentator, told AFP.

"He also has to placate the opposition within his own party. People have high expectations from the government. So, Koirala will face several challenges," he added.

As part of the weekend deal to form government, the Nepali Congress has agreed to UML's request to hold fresh elections for top posts including for prime minister and president after the constitution is delivered.

The Maoists only agreed to be part of the new assembly in December after securing a pledge from the other parties to probe their claims that the elections were rigged.

The last assembly dissolved over the differences among parties on the issue of state boundaries, as well as the power of states and the president.

When he was in his 30s and exiled with his family in India, Koirala was involved in hijacking a plane known to be carrying boxes of cash, which he and his relatives wanted to use to fund their Nepali Congress party.

He spent three years in an Indian jail over the crime, which was masterminded by senior Congress leader and relative GP Koirala. ●



Nepal's newly elected prime minister Sushil Koirala greets supporters as he leaves the parliament in Kathmandu

# India boat capsizes kills 29

AFP, New Delhi

An overloaded passenger boat has capsized in a river in eastern India, leaving 29 people confirmed dead as rescuers searched for others feared missing, an official said Monday.

Scuba divers aided by rescue helicopters pulled dozens of people from the water after the boat carrying some 100 passengers overturned on Sunday in the state of Orissa, a senior official said.

"We have recovered 29 bodies so far. Search operations will continue because three more persons are still missing," special relief commissioner P.K. Mohapatra told AFP.

Survivors and eyewitnesses told local media the boat was returning from a picnic spot on one side of the Hirakud reservoir and was crossing the attached Mahanadi river in Sambalpur district.

Passengers panicked after the boat started taking on water when its engine stopped, according to local media.

"People started panicking when water began to flood the boat from numerous leaks. Many jumped out to get into two other boats travelling close by. This led to the accident as the boat lost balance and capsized," the Indian Express newspaper reported.

Boat accidents are common in India, mainly because of overcrowding, poor maintenance, lax regulations and a lack of life jackets and other safety equipment. ●

# French official pleads not guilty to child rape in India

AFP, Bangalore

A French consular official pleaded not guilty on Monday to charges of raping his three-year-old daughter when he appeared for a pre-trial hearing in a court in southern India, a prosecutor said.

Pascal Mazurier entered his plea in the city of Bangalore over allegations that he raped his daughter in a case that dates back to June 2012.

Sessions Court judge Shubha Gowdar formally framed the charges of rape during Mazurier's brief appearance after ruling last month that there was sufficient evidence for him to face trial.

"The sessions court judge, who is also the special judge for child rights, framed the charges against Pascal Mazurier for offences punishable under

the Indian Penal Code," public prosecutor BT Venkatesh said.

The judge adjourned the case until February 15 when she will fix a date for the trial to start, Venkatesh told AFP outside the court.

Mazurier, 40, was arrested in June 2012 on a complaint filed by his wife and spent four months in jail before being released on bail.

Mazurier's lawyers had argued there was insufficient evidence against him, but the judge ruled in January that there was a prima facie case against him.

The wife and women's rights groups have accused France of supporting the husband at the expense of the interests of the alleged victim and her two siblings, who are all French nationals. ●

# Italy slams 'unacceptable' India charge against marines

AFP, Rome

Italy on Monday slammed as "unacceptable" a serious maritime security charge India has levelled against two Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen they mistook for pirates while guarding a cargo ship.

"The charge proposed by the Indian authorities is unacceptable," Prime Minister Enrico Letta said in a message on Twitter, adding: "Italy and the European Union will react."

Defence Minister Mario Mauro also flew to India to visit the two men, Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Gironi, saying that the charges "do not hold" and criticising the "fragility" of India's justice system.

India on Saturday said it will go ahead with prosecuting the two marines under a maritime security law against acts of violence against any person on a ship that calls for a maximum 10-year punishment and fine.

The country had earlier said it planned to apply a different section of the maritime security law that would have automatically invoked the death penalty if the marines were found guilty, but it backed away from that after an outcry from Italy.

The marines were initially accused of murder over the shooting deaths of two fishermen off the coast of Kerala in 2012.

They say they mistook the fishing boat for a pirate vessel and only fired

warning shots.

India has dragged its feet in starting a trial, with legal experts attributing the delay to uncertainty over which law to use to prosecute the men.

The delay prompted the Italian marines last month to ask India's Supreme Court to drop the murder charges against them and allow them to return home.

Italy insists the pair should be tried on home soil as the shootings involved an Italian-flagged vessel in what Rome insists were international waters.

India asserts the killings took place in waters under its jurisdiction. The marines have been given bail and are staying at the Italian embassy in New Delhi. ●

# Beijing slams 'irresponsible' US warning on S China Sea

AFP, Beijing

China condemned the US Pacific air force commander Monday for "irresponsible remarks" after he warned it would be provocative if Beijing declared an air defence zone over the South China Sea.

The response rattles up a war of words also involving the Philippines and Japan over territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas respectively.

Beijing set up an "air defence identification zone" (ADIZ) over the latter waters in November that included contested islands claimed by it and Tokyo, prompting condemnation by Washington.

Amid concerns Beijing may do the same to assert territorial claims in the South China Sea, US Pacific Air Force Commander Herbert Carlisle said on Sunday such a step would be "very provocative."

At a regular press briefing on Monday, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying hit back, saying that "setting up an air defence identification zone is a reasonable right for any sovereign state to exercise."

"Relevant officials should reflect carefully on what standing they have to make any irresponsible remarks about China's exercising its own reasonable and legitimate rights."

Pointing out that the US and other countries also have ADIZs, she asked, "Why can only China not (do the same)?" ●

# N Korea scraps US envoy's invite as tensions mount

AFP, Washington

Tensions tightened on the Korean peninsula Monday, as North Korea cancelled a US envoy's visit over a jailed Korean American, and Seoul and Washington set dates for military drills denounced by Pyongyang.

Frictions with Pyongyang will dominate the agenda when US Secretary of State John Kerry makes a brief visit to Seoul later this week as part of an Asia tour. The US State Department said it was "deeply disappointed" by the North's decision to rescind - without explanation - its invitation to Robert King, the US special envoy for North Korean human rights issues. King had hoped to secure the release of Kenneth Bae, who was arrested in November 2012 and later sentenced to 15 years' hard labour on charges of seeking to topple the North Korean government.

Bae, a tour operator, was described by a North Korean court as a militant Christian evangelist.

It is the second time King has been rebuffed. North Korea previously scrapped an invite at the last minute for him to discuss Bae's case at the end of August.

Bae, 45, began serving his sentence in May 2013 and was admitted to hospital in August with kidney and liver problems. ●

# Police: Suicide bomber kills four women in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

A suicide bomber killed four women in northwest Pakistan on Monday in an attempted attack on mourners at a funeral, police said. The blast hit a house in Peshawar, a frontline city in Pakistan's battle against Islamist insurgents, close to where a group of people were holding funeral prayers, senior police official Najeeb Ur Rehman told AFP.

According to Rehman, the mourners spotted three would-be suicide bombers coming towards them but managed to scare them off. Two fled the scene while the third entered a nearby home, unconnected to the mourners, and blew himself up at the entrance, said Rehman.

"Four women died and six people were wounded in the suicide blast," he said. Shafqat Malik, chief of Peshawar's Bomb Disposal Unit, confirmed the suicide attack and told AFP that the bomber used around six kilograms (13 pounds) of explosives along with ball bearings in his suicide vest. ●

# Pakistan Taliban sets tough terms for peace

AFP

The Taliban have demanded the release of all jailed fighters and the withdrawal of troops from tribal areas as

conditions for talks with the Pakistani government, officials said.

Negotiating teams held a first meeting on Thursday, but the dozen conditions now laid down by Tehreek-e-Tal-



Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) committee members Maulana Sami-ul-Haq (R) and Professor Ibrahim Khan (L) hold a press conference in the northwestern town of Akora Khattak

iban Pakistan (TTP) will further cast doubts on chances of success, the AFP news agency reported.

The group wants an estimated 4,000 prisoners freed, including those awaiting execution. They outlined their demands to a team of Islamist clerics representing them in preliminary negotiations with the government about ending a seven-year conflict that has claimed thousands of lives.

A TTP commander told the AFP the prisoner and troops issues were a "test case" for the government to prove its sincerity.

"This is the first round of talks. The committee members will now meet the government committee and will forward our demands, they will meet us again with a reply," the commander said.

The three-member team representing the TTP has returned to Islamabad after meeting the group's 10-member council at their headquarters in the mountainous tribal district of North Waziristan over the weekend.

Pakistan's military entered the tribal areas in 2003 after the US invasion in 2001 of Afghanistan, launching operations

against homegrown and foreign fighters.

The withdrawal of troops and release of prisoners are longstanding demands of the TTP.

The Taliban said they wanted security in the tribal areas taken out of the hands of the army and given to local security and administrative officials, a move which would strengthen the fighters' control.

The negotiating team was led by Ibrahim Khan, of the Jamaat-e-Islami religious political party, and also included clerics Yousuf Shah and Maulana Abdul Haseeb. The Taliban's other demands included nationwide implementation of a strict form of Islamic sharia law and Islamic-based education at all levels, an end to Pakistan's military support for the US, a halt to drone strikes, and an end to interest-based banking.

Talks between the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Taliban began last week.

But there has been widespread scepticism about the chances of ending the TTP's bloody campaign, particularly since regional deals have quickly broken down in the past. ●

# Thai police arrest first protest leader for flouting law

AFP, Bangkok

Thai police on Monday arrested an anti-government protest leader, their first such move after months of defiant rallies in Bangkok aimed at ousting Yingluck Shinawatra's beleaguered government.

Protest leaders have flouted arrest warrants and an emergency decree to deliver caustic daily speeches, lead marches, block roads and occupy government buildings in their bid to topple Yingluck's government.

Rallies have continued despite the declaration of a state of emergency before a February 2 snap election. The poll was widely disrupted by protesters in Bangkok and the southern provinces.

Sontiyani Cheunruethainaitam was

arrested on Monday morning at a hotel in Bangkok, according to the head of the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) Tarit Pengdith.

"He was the first arrest for defying the state of emergency," he told AFP.

Authorities have repeatedly stated their reluctance to arrest protest leaders. They fear it could spark clashes with the crowd who are occupying key intersections in Bangkok for the fifth week of a self-styled "shutdown" - albeit in diminishing numbers.

Throughout the three months of protests police have adopted defensive tactics, a move which analysts say is intended to avoid violence and the possibility of provoking a military coup.

Dozens of arrest warrants have been issued against leaders of the anti-gov-

ernment movement, who want to topple Yingluck and curb the influence of her divisive billionaire brother Thaksin on Thai politics.

Sontiyani was a former director at a fiercely anti-Thaksin cable channel and has spoken at the rallies.

"We count him as number two (in the movement) because he was one of the people who coordinated the sponsors for the protest," Tarit added.

The state of emergency is still in place across Bangkok and some surrounding areas.

Firebrand protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban has repeatedly challenged authorities to arrest him, taunting police for failing to execute three warrants linked to the protests - including one for treason. ●

# Woman shot dead, burnt in Thai 'revenge attack'

AFP, Bangkok

A policeman's wife was shot dead and then set on fire in front of terrified shoppers at a busy market in Thailand's violence-ridden deep south, officials said Monday, in an apparent revenge attack.

The 28-year-old Buddhist woman was gunned down on Sunday afternoon as she returned to her car from a market in the Ratapanyang area of Pattani province.

A local police officer said a note left at the scene indicated the attack was in revenge for the deaths last week of three Muslim brothers - aged three, five and nine.

Insurgents blame Thai authorities for the boys' murder - although there has been no official evidence to back

up the claim.

The latest killings raise the spectre of a spiral of tit-for-tat killings between Muslims and Buddhists in Pattani.

The restive region is one of three Muslim-majority provinces in the grip of a bloody decade-long insurgency that has claimed over 5,900 lives - the majority of them civilians.

After being shot, the woman's body was torched in front of market goers, the police officer told AFP, but no-one had come forward with information fearing retribution from the attackers - who are suspected militants.

Last Monday, the Muslim brothers were gunned down in front of their home in neighbouring Narathiwat province. Their pregnant mother and father were also shot in the attack but survived. ●



## Good industrial relations requires good unions

Every industrial sector in Bangladesh has suffered from unions which are not representative of the workforce, and which are organised by political parties for the purpose of extorting chanda from factories.

This has held back the development of a mature system of industrial relations in which factory owners and employees work together constructively. It also increases the risks of outside agitators influencing wildcat strikes that are against the long-term interests of the industry.

Workers need an effective voice to argue their concerns. Labour groups which exploit worker concerns for their own interests do not benefit the workforce and should be discouraged.

The best way to overcome this problem is to enable more genuinely representative worker organisations. Bangladesh's amendment of the labour law last year and ratification of the ILO conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining are all moves which can assist this goal. The upholding of these rights is also seen as important to helping win back the GSP trade privilege withdrawn by the United States.

In this context, it is concerning that a recent survey of 21 factories around Dhaka reports instances of managers intimidating and mistreating employees involved in setting up and organising unions. Such actions not only breach the law but undermine necessary initiatives to protect and develop the sector.

The government and BGMEA should be more proactive in stopping the intimidation of trade union organisers in the RMG sector, as effective unions are necessary to defuse tensions between factory owners and workers. At the same time, the law must protect factories from extortion; a trade union should not become a cover for extortion.

Good unions act in everyone's interest, management as well as labour's

## Housing policy needs a more strategic approach

The devastating fire at the Jheelpar slum in Madhubagh which killed a 3-year-old child is a reminder of the precarious living conditions of the urban poor.

Slums and squatter settlements have grown as millions of poor people have been drawn to cities by employment opportunities. The lack of planning and effective regulation on how such housing is developed makes them a major safety hazard.

Poor sanitation and cramped conditions harm the health of all residents. Risks posed by fires are worsened by the fact that clean water, electricity and gas connections are often not provided legally or safely.

Attention drawn by this type of tragic incident, necessarily focuses on basic safety issues and welfare needs.

However, policy-makers and city planners must also think more long term. Migratory pressures towards cities are steadily increasing, so we need to develop long-term solutions to provide good quality and affordable housing so that the urban poor are no longer relegated to living in slums.

Currently many residents of slums are trapped in them because they are close to employment opportunities. They also face continual rent increases and pay higher bills for basic civic services, keeping them in a cycle of poverty.

A strategic approach to relocating industries and building better housing in more affordable areas, could help many existing slum-dwellers. Long term improvements to congestion and public transport can also help by allowing more people to live further away from work. City authorities have a duty not to turn a blind eye towards the poor conditions in which slum dwellers live, but policy makers must address the causes which give rise to slums as well.

We need to develop long-term solutions to provide good quality and affordable housing so that the urban poor are no longer relegated to living in slums

## Letters to the Editor



### LETTER OF THE DAY

#### The suffering of people in Dhaka

February 8

One evening, I wanted to visit my sister and her family at Zia colony, from Mohakhali. It is at best a 10 minute journey by bus, but it took me nearly an hour and half. I was waiting for a bus, but couldn't get into one, because they were already filled to the point that a few passengers were standing at the door, and looked in danger of falling off. Though many staff buses passed us, they weren't picking up passengers as it was after service hours. However, a few of us managed to get onto a staff bus.

Situations such as this make me realise that we don't need so many buildings, universities, hospitals, offices, etc in the city. What we need is decentralisation and better public facilities,

People are facing all kinds of problems across the country, which our government has a responsibility to tackle. This government came into power without the people's mandate in a one-sided election. Only 10% of the people voted, and more than half the constituencies had no vote. Our ministers have vowed they will complete a five year term.

In order to earn the people's confidence, and to get their mandate, the government needs to work for the people sincerely and honestly to improve their lives.

Merina Hossain Mita

DT

#### BCL men vandalise MBSTU over Facebook status

February 2

Sam

How surprising that the ruling party's thugs are above the law! Not!!

WaliulHaqueKhondker

The BCL said they had no committee on campus. Why then did the police not arrest the culprits? Why did university authorities not file cases? Has the VC tried to contact the education minister over this issue? Very disappointed with the role of the varsity administration and the police!

#### NBR Chairman: Owners of posh houses don't pay taxes

February 3

We all know this. But Mr Chariman, what are you going to do about it? First off, "urging" falls on deaf ears, and one is talking here about real estate assets!

Surely these people can be investigated, and asked to show the sources of funds used to build such "posh" houses? If the houses have been built with tax-paid money, then good for them for creating wealth and enjoying it( and creating jobs in the process). If not, then they should be penalised for non-declaration/payment of tax. Urging them will produce nothing.

Akhtar Shah

#### Serious questions for the BNP

February 3

I endorse your excoriation of the then BNP-led administration's abject failure in, first, unearthing and aborting the diabolical smuggling plot. And second, even more egregiously, in avoiding punishing the criminal depravity of the three men in its government involved in the smuggling plot. Of course, we later had a 2-year military-run autocracy which, while making a national spectacle of (fairly or wrongly) exposing and imprisoning myriad politicians across different parties for nepotism and other assorted misdeeds, somehow strangely failed to resolve this arms smuggling case.

The AL then saw through its own five-year term without a resolution to this by-now 10 year-old case. One could be forgiven for feeling that as just as the belated final verdict apparently is, there's a whiff of political expediency (to its timing), too. On another note, I'm actually appalled to reflect on how enthusiastic our judicial system, indeed our society, is about the death penalty.

Lastly, although your criticism in this article of the BNP's inept and insincere handling of the smuggling case is apt, I'd argue that your using this case to clearly insinuate that this sort of scurrilous conduct is perhaps something that is endemic in the party, or that they have to now publicly atone for is a bit of a stretch. I take issue with your suggesting that short of doing that, it's going to be hard for the BNP "to be taken seriously as a democratic entity." That's rhetorical over-reach. The BNP's democratic credentials are a bit stronger than you'd admit.

Ronnie



#### Stopping begging helps everyone

February 8

PA

The government must also stop people forcing their way into shops or public transport to demand money.

Zahurul Islam

We must not forget that we are still a country of beggars, and have to resort to begging and bribing to get anything done in our own country! Change the mindset first!!

Javed Arun Zaman

Begging has spoiled the street urchins. They are losing their self-esteem and dignity by begging.

#### Illegal establishments evicted in the beach

February 9

Good step, and it should be continued for the sake of tourism.

PB

#### A feeling of emptiness

February 4

Empty stadiums for football and cricket in a city with millions of people. Shame. The administrators should be giving tickets away for free to fill the seats and make a better experience all round.

Osmania

#### Police-BCL pound RU demo, 20 shot

February 3

What happened in RU yesterday is detestable, and makes the Chhatra League look worse than the Jamaat.

Seraj Islam

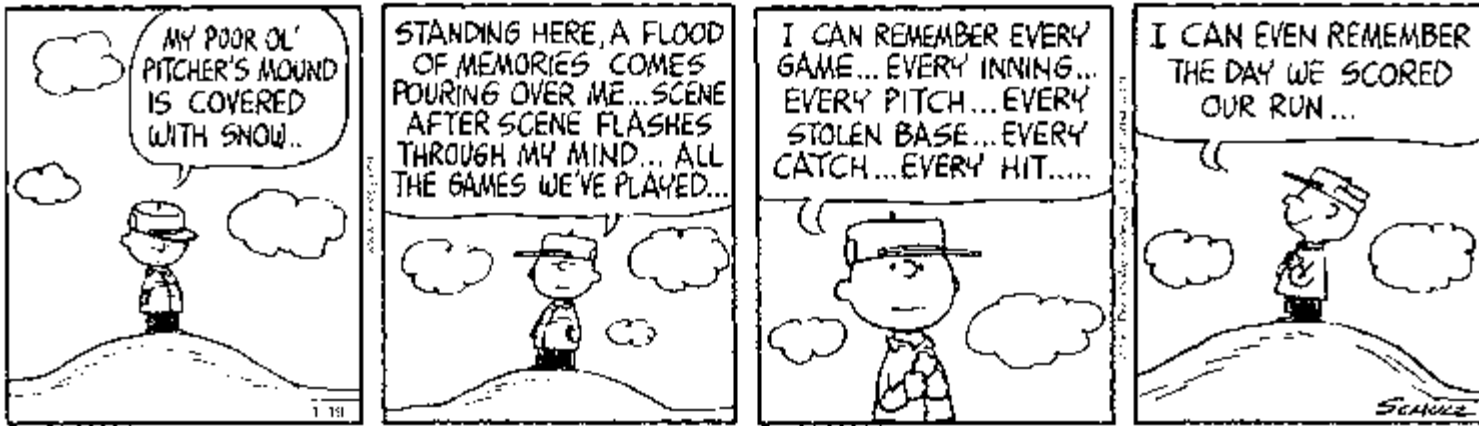
#### Be Heard

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### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### PEANUTS



### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

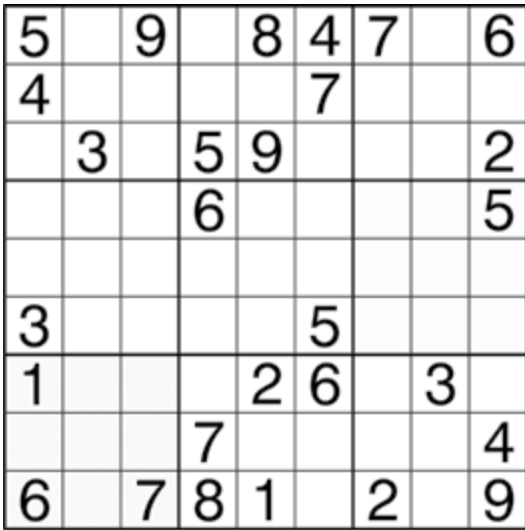
- Decay (3)
- Holy persons (6)
- Object of worship (4)
- Consume (3)
- Smooth and even (mus) (6)
- Vibration (6)
- Irritable (5)
- Corruptly mercenary (5)
- Wait on (6)
- Literary ridicule (6)
- Frozen treat (3)
- Strong wind (4)
- Bed canopy (6)
- Cricket score (3)

#### DOWN

- Corrosion (4)
- Weary (4)
- Alone (4)
- Vigilant (5)
- Approaches (5)
- Make lace (3)
- Tale (5)
- Fish eggs (3)
- Extinct bird (3)
- Newt (3)
- Large cask (3)
- Call on (5)
- Musical sounds (5)
- Big (5)
- Lacerate (4)
- At all times (4)
- Soft feathers (4)
- Top card (3)

### SUDOKU

**How to solve Sudoku:**  
Fill in the blank spaces with the numbers 1 – 9. Every row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain all nine digits with no number repeating.



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

#### Crossword



#### Sudoku







An anniversary only means something if its spirit is rekindled

BIGSTOCK

# Cotton without candy

Ikhtisad Ahmed

Valentine’s Day is the unavoidable anniversary, a reminder that never fails to annoy with its constantly increasing demands year-over-year. An imaginary cupid in his very real loincloth is the mischievous spectre on the day. A different ghost haunts Zuccotti Park and its smaller siblings sprinkled across the Western hemisphere.

Its special day is the melancholic Occursary on the 17th day of the ninth month. While this year will see the third occurrence of this day of mourning, Bangladesh has decided to celebrate an anniversary of a similar kind for the first time on February 5.

Ganajagaran Mancha, that great symbol of a people’s movement that delights and disappoints, enthrals and enrages, and all the while divides where it should unite, is a year old.

Shahbagh gave reason to hope, as did the Occupy movement. Unlike its predecessor, the former’s hope breathed briefly before it got embroiled in the very mess it sought to resolve, it promised to rise up against.

It has been called a Bangladeshi Spring by seasoned commentators and misguided politicians. Lest they forget, the Arab Spring was a rejection of autocracy, brought about by people who sacrificed everything just to see their hope flicker in a brief moment.

Such bold claims should not be made by those in power, who un-

doubtedly seek to remain so in perpetuity. The lamentable comparisons with the Occupy movement, more apt, provide reasons to hope as well as lose it.

Despite people taking action during the reign of a perceivably moderate president, Zuccotti Park was never going to be endorsed by a Republican party swinging further right. The public support from President Obama was the day it died in terms of tangible achievements.

The opposition at the time was never going to lend their support to it because of its detestable, flawed principles. There was only one side that could offer the brave orphans shelter and reap a political benefit. As Occupy proved, doing so not only prevents Spring from threatening to arrive, it also dilutes the real message and sets a new agenda that ultimately leads the movement away from the people and towards mockery and doom.

All that will remain are unwanted memories of jubilation when a man was sentenced to death, and cake being distributed when he was hanged

The president shored up support that would ensure re-election. The occupation was quietly ushered away by the subsequent withdrawal of the government’s support to bring an end to the spectacle that was a nuisance to the ruling class. The movement had to find a home in the minds of the populace.

The success stemming from this could be greater than the failure of its flaccid end, should it ever come to pass. Similarly, Shahbagh was birthed because of the compromising and politicking of a perceivably moderate government, as a necessary stand against the ruling class.

concluding them.

For those four decades, a deadly cocktail of domestic and world politics, ill-conceived diplomacy, organisations with unholy agendas, and ill-intentioned lobbying saw the ruling class repeatedly fail to bring anyone to justice. It has been a carefully choreographed dance of systematic heel-dragging, endemic compromising on and sacrificing of principles, and corruption of morals that has become symptomatic of a wholly broken system.

If the Ganajagaran Mancha is to live up to its sobriquet, its spirit – a denunciation of politicking by leaders of all political parties and a rejection of the political process that ignores the rule of law and separation of powers – needs to haunt the conscience and thought of Bangladesh and its children, present and future.

This can only happen if that spirit is revived, nurtured, and proliferated. If this miracle of bringing the dead back to life does not happen, the cries for justice for the everyman and an end to oppression by the ruling class will be forgotten.

All that will remain are unwanted memories of jubilation when a man was sentenced to death, and cake being distributed when he was hanged. The temporary cotton anniversary will never be worth its weight in gold. ●

Ikhtisad Ahmed is a writer and an erstwhile lawyer. He can be contacted on Twitter via @Ikhtisad.

# A smooth ride in the coming year?

Mohammad Ali Sattar

For some, it may not be easy to accept. For many, it has been a surprising triumph for the ruling party and its allies, and for a few, it is indeed a remarkable success. I am talking about the recent pre- and post-election issues and events.

Whether the Awami League leader and her colleagues deserve a pat on the back might be a matter of debate, but they have, by all means, managed to overcome the stumbling blocks that came their way in the run up to the polls of January 5.

Politically, the AL-led alliance has been doing their homework for some time now. They were seriously working on the details of the constitutional clauses that allowed them to take refuge under the pages of the state document, while sidetracking the moral issues of democracy.

Even the debate over morality is gradually taking a backseat. It will fade out soon. The government is already up with so many development and political programs in hand, that people and experts will hardly find the time to ponder over past issues.

They will be served with newer plans and concepts that will keep them busy working on the current programs, and they will give their opinions on these. So the door is almost shut on the last polls and related matters.

A side has been saying that the caretaker government system is actually unconstitutional and should be done away with. Many are of the opinion that the system is a practice of mistrust and disregard to the very mechanism of democracy. However, Bangladesh’s only acceptable elections have come under a caretaker system.

The Hasina government has forced the 10th national polls under a ruling government. This will be the pattern for all future elections, says the AL. If you talk about the current practice around the world, it may be true.

The debate over morality is gradually taking a backseat. It will fade out soon

But I guess Bangladesh is not ready to accept polls unless held under a non-partisan caretaker system at the centre.

But there has to be transition. The AL government has done that, maybe not exactly in a democratic manner. It has wisely used its majority power in the parliament.

It has reverted to a polls system under the incumbent government. It has managed to neutralise (or paralyse) the stronger section of the Jatiya Party. Ever since Ershad’s fall, conviction, and jail terms, he has been in the soup, never really finding anything compatible with this plans and thoughts.

Whether the government will welcome the challenges of BNP-backed candidates is not known

Even his party men were tentative in their allegiance towards him. If JaPa existed this long, it was mainly due to AL support and pampering.

The final nail in the coffin was Ershad’s trip to CMH just prior to the January 5 polls. No one knew that this was to be the last journey of this man from the political world.

It has successfully kept Begum Zia and her men out of the circuit for some time now. More steps will be planned to keep heavyweights busy with legal issues, rather than concentrating on political programs against the government.

There have been calls from government party members and supporters that Begum Zia should also be brought under the confines of the law, especially in the arms haul case. They opine that Begum Zia, being the then head of government, and having had knowledge of the entire operation, was also guilty.

Maybe the government apparatus might drag Begum Zia to the hallways of the court. There are scores of other cases coming up against senior members of the party. One is already facing ACC flak over the alleged illegal possession of his Gulshan house. Another is under focus for alleged money laundering. Yet another is a suspect over receiving kickbacks from a foreign company against a business favour.

The holding of upazilla polls will also help. The government maintains that the BNP’s choice to participate in the upcoming local polls proves that it has tacitly recognised the present government’s legitimacy. Whether the government will welcome the challenges of BNP-backed candidates is not known.

Since all sectors have acquiesced a little too soon, there seems to be no threat to the AL’s power or actions. We should perhaps wait for 2015 to deliver something new. ●

Mohammad Ali Sattar is a journalist and DT columnist.

L A R G E R T H A N L I F E

# Remembering an aficionado

Ekram Kabir

I listened to his voice and watched him on TV several times before I met him. For someone like me, who grew up listening to cricket and football commentaries in the 70s and 80s, he was a big man, a national figure. You’d think twice before approaching him.

But I had to meet him.

He loved his work. His encouragement has created many profoundly professional reporters over the years

It was in ’91, a few months after the launch of The Daily Star, and immediately after my Masters exam. I went to see him with a timid heart. I was advised by my teacher Syed Manzoorul Islam that if I wanted to be a journalist, he was the man I should meet. He was the managing editor of the paper at that time. A big post! God knows what he would be like when I went to see him!

On a sunny morning, I went to his

office at Dainik Bangla intersection. I thought he would keep me waiting before he actually allowed me to see him. It was a great surprise that I only had to wait for two minutes.

There Tawfiq Aziz Khan was, with a moustache like a Victorian Englishman, and finely brushed shiny hair, sitting at a huge table.

“Yes, young man, what can I do for you?” he asked, waving at me to sit down.

I lost my words. Somehow I managed to say: “I want to become a journalist, sir.”

Wanting to know about my education and family background, he asked me just one question: “What makes you think that you can become a journalist without studying journalism?”

“Sir, because I believe journalism is all about common sense,” I replied.

He picked up the phone and spoke to the then executive editor Mahfuz Anam: “Mahfuz, I’ve got a boy from the English department. I think we should take him.” He then asked me to go and see the executive editor, saying that he would finalise everything.

That was the day I started working as a journalist with The Daily Star, the new paper with lots of promises.

Tawfiq sir turned into Tawfiq bhai in no time, but as the managing editor,

he was always busy with administration. He, however, never missed a chance to come to the editorial and features department and join in on our adda. He used to talk about how journalism was when their generation entered the profession.

Tawfiq bhai came closer to us when he became the executive editor of the paper. It was at that time that he was in the real game, and started teaching us what he learnt over the years about journalism. Unlike many, who tried to teach us that “journalism was an art of hiding our thoughts,” he taught us the “freedom of expressing ourselves.”

Tawfiq bhai didn’t have any beat, his common sense in journalism was so mature that we could look up to him as our news editor, chief reporter, sports editor, cultural and entertainment editor, and above all – the editor. He was always so versatile that we hardly needed to consult our editor to guide us.

The most attractive feature in his character was that he could depend on and trust us, who were as old as his sons, with his write-ups. He would hand over the editorials he’d written to me for making them better. He loved his work and loved to transmit that attitude among the people around him. His encouragement has created many



profoundly professional reporters over the years.

The most striking feature in Tawfiq bhai’s character was his passion for sports and sports reporting. No matter what his duties were, the first thing in the morning that used to pop up in his mind was what the next morning’s sports pages would contain. We’d get surprised by his continuous dedication

to journalism. He was relentless in his passion for perfecting our work.

Unfortunately, he left us before the Bangladeshi TV and online media boom. There was so much more to learn from him. Bangladesh media will keep missing this journalism aficionado. ●

Ekram Kabir is Executive Editor of Natunbarta.com.



# DU theatre department's annual festival begins today

**Entertainment desk**

The 8th Annual Theatre Festival of the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies, Dhaka University will begin today. The four-day festival will feature a total of six plays which will be staged at the auditorium of TSC every evening.



Department of Theatre and Performance Studies rehearse for the festival DHAKA TRIBUNE

With the slogan “Amader Bhasha Amader Bibidho Roton,” the festival starts from today and will continue un-

til February 14. The six plays will be performed by the senior students of the department while the students of different batches are working on set and sound design, costumes, make-up and others, informed Sudip Chakroborthy, a teacher of the department, to Dhaka Tribune. He said: “The students are taking

eminent dramatist Munaer Chowdhury and directed by Mahbubur Rahman. Vice Chancellor of University of Dhaka Professor Dr A A M S Arefin Siddique will be present as chief guest of the inaugural ceremony. Pro Vice Chancellor (academic) Professor Dr Nasreen Ahmed, Pro Vice Chancellor (administration) Professor Dr Shahid Akhtar Hossain and the treasurer will be present as special guests of the programme. On February 12, Edward Elby’s *The Zoo Story* will be staged. The play is translated by Kazi Mustain Billah and directed by Tahsinur Rahman. Eugene O’Neill’s *Ill* will be staged on the same day, translated by Kabir Chowdhury and directed by Nusrat Jahan. WB Yeats’ *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, translated by Kabir Chowdhury and directed by Cathorin Purification will showcase on February 13. Directed by Tarik Ibrahim Shojib, *Farce of the Devil’s Bridge* written by Henri Gheon and translated by Khondoker Kamal Hos-sain will also stage that day. On the last day of the festival, *De-sire Under the Elms* written by Eugene O’Neill and translated by Kabir Chowdhury will be staged by the students. ●

## Tithi's first album released

**Afroze Jahan Chaity**

On the occasion of Valentine’s Day, promising singer Jannate Romman Tithi released her first solo album titled *Kolpothithi* under the banner of Laser Vision. In the presence of distinguished guests such as prominent singer Kanachapa, the album was launched through a function on February 7. The album contains nine songs in total: *Poraner Poran*, *Bhaber Manush*, *Ei Jhirijhiri Hawa*, *Dibanishi O Shopno* and five other songs. All songs are composed and written by popular Bangladeshi musicians, IK Rajon, K Zia, Lelin, Rafiqul Islam, Abdur Rashid and Emad Uddin. Tithi wishes to take her musical talent much further and expand it into other genres of music. Regarding the album, Tithi shared with the Dhaka Tribune: “The songs are very melodious and rhyth-



mic. The lyrics are really very touching and I hope the listeners will love them.” Tithi also expressed her satisfaction saying: “We have tried our best to write good lyrics to the music lovers. *Bhaber Manush* already received positive responses from my audience. I request that the audience buy original CDs from the market.” ●



## Airin to enter the age of dinosaurs

**Entertainment Desk**

Dhallywood’s newcomer Airin has signed up for her fourth film *Time Machine*, where she will be seen in the age of dinosaurs. The shooting of the film is already underway at Cox’s Bazaar. Written by Delwar Hossain Jhontu and directed by Saymon Jahan, the film has a fictional storyline that includes time travel and the age of dinosaurs. About the film, Airin said: “In this film, I will be transported to the age of dinosaurs. My character’s name is Julie. I am hoping that the audience will really enjoy the story as it is targeted for the younger age groups.” Airin has drawn in audience with her attractive acting skills and appealing appearance through her debut film *Bhalobasa Zindabad*. On the other hand, she completed shooting of Saif Chandan’s *Chheleti Abol* *Tabol Meyeti Pagol Pagol* and Gaziur Rahman’s *Ei Tumi Shei Tumi*. In both of the films, she is the counterpart of Dhallywood newcomer Arju. Both the films are in queue for release. ●

## Shunte Ki Pao! releases for Dhaka audience



**Entertainment Desk**

Kamar Ahmad Simon’s film *Shunte Ki Pao!* (Are You Listening!) is going to be released in Star Cineplex on February 21. The film recently won the *Golden Conch* for best documentary in 13th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), one of the oldest and prestigious film festivals in Asia. It was declared at a dazzling ceremony held in Tata Centre in Mumbai on Sunday, where legendary filmmakers Shyam Benegal and Adoor Gopalkrishnan handed over two crests and certificates and award money in the names of both the director Kamar Ahmad Simon and the Producer Sara Afreen. Moreover, Kamar also won the award for Best Cinematography for the film as well. Earlier, *Shunte Ki Pao!* received the Grand Prix for best film in 35th Cinema Du Reel, one of the major festivals in Europe, held in Paris last year. The film also received the Jury Prize in Film Southasia 2013, was the curtain opener of 55th edition of the oldest documentary festival of the world Dok Leipzig in 2012 and screened in the 25th edition of documentary festival IDFA. ●

## Concepts of Space and Rabindranath Tagore on display at AFD

**Entertainment Desk**

In conjunction with the second Dhaka Art Summit, Alliance Française de Dhaka is holding a solo photography exhibition titled *Concepts of Space and Rabindranath Tagore* by Indian photographer Samit Das. The exhibition will continue until February 12. Tagore’s concept of space and architecture is a vast area of exploration and it is extremely difficult to express it through just a few visuals within a limited space in its entire entirety. For many years, Samit has been researching the

architecture and interiors designed by Tagore himself. For the last fifteen years of his life, Samit Das has been deeply involved with this subject-matter trying to explore the details, actively engaging with the enormous amount of materials left behind, which would probably take many years to comprehend. His journey with his subject-matter began around 1993 when he started to explore it as a part of his MA dissertation in 1996. Later on, his relationship with this topic extended to various other directions. Within a very limited number of vi-

suals, Samit has tried to come up with a brief presentation of Tagore’s idea of space and architecture through the architecture of Santiniketan. Here, the journey begins from collate Jorasanko house and moves through Bangladesh to conclude in Santiniketan. Samat has deep interest on archiving and specialises in painting, photography, interactive artworks and artist’s book. He is profound in creating art and architectural installation. Samit has his solo exhibitions in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Singapore and London. ●



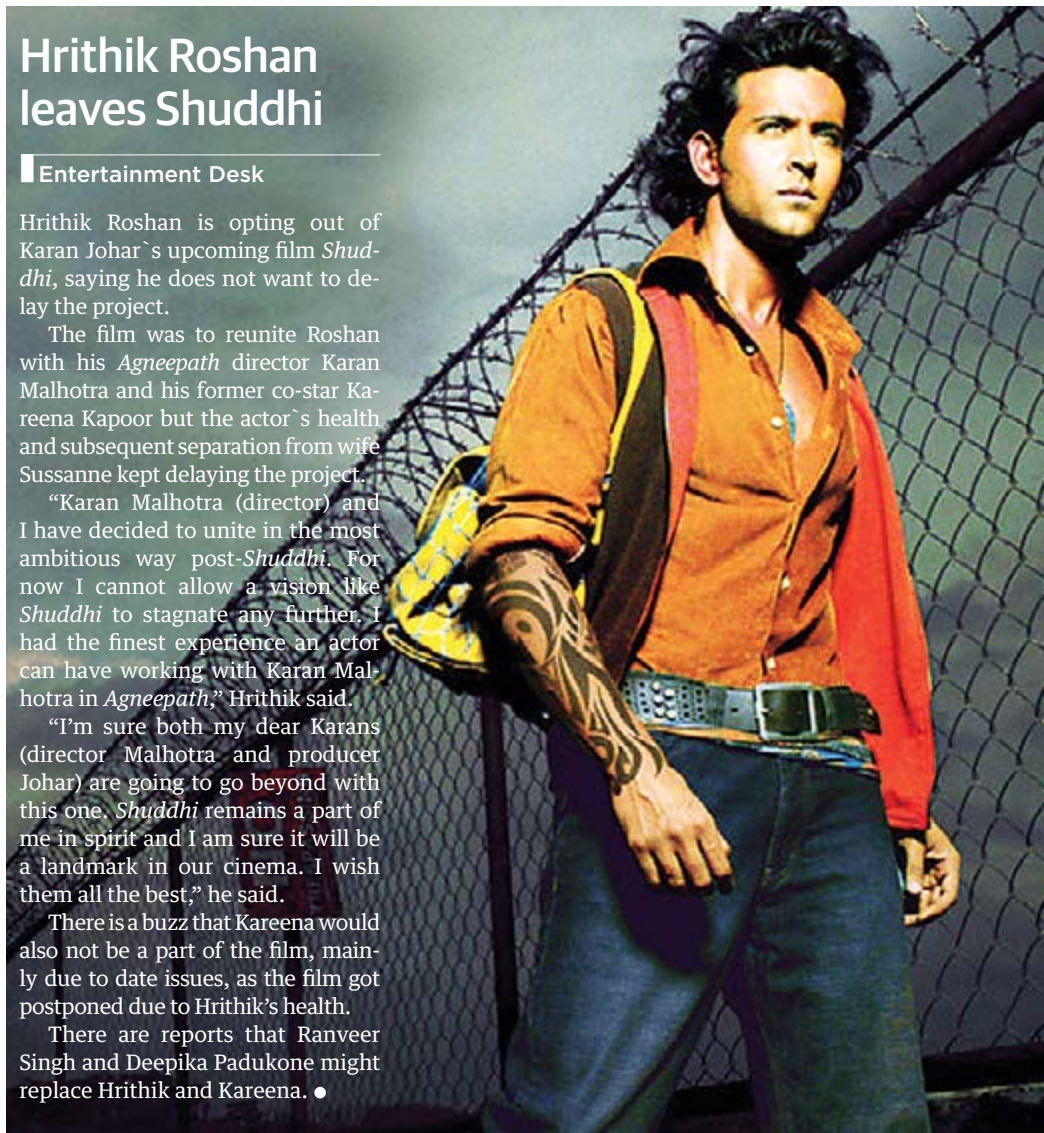
Tagore in Santiniketan

## Amitabh back with Bhoothnath Returns



**Entertainment Desk**

*Bhoothnath Returns* is a sequel to the 2008 horror-comedy film *Bhoothnath*, which also starred Juhi Chawla and Shah Rukh Khan besides Bachchan as the friendly ghost. Rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh has become a phenomenon in Bollywood, and he is all set to sing in Amitabh Bachchan’s *Bhoothnath Returns*. Amitabh Bachchan tweeted, “Yo Yo Honey Singh in the house for a song for *Bhoothnath Returns* ... cool and swag and urban ... whatever the lingo meant ...” So far Honey Singh has given tracks in films like *Cocktail*, *Chennai Express*, *Boss*, *Dedh Ishqiya* and *Yaariyaan*. Honey Singh’s songs have been pictured on actors like Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar and Arshad Warsi. And now the megastar would be seen rapping in the film. ●



## Hrithik Roshan leaves Shuddhi

**Entertainment Desk**

Hrithik Roshan is opting out of Karan Johar’s upcoming film *Shuddhi*, saying he does not want to delay the project. The film was to reunite Roshan with his *Agneepath* director Karan Malhotra and his former co-star Kareena Kapoor but the actor’s health and subsequent separation from wife Sussanne kept delaying the project. “Karan Malhotra (director) and I have decided to unite in the most ambitious way post-*Shuddhi*. For now I cannot allow a vision like *Shuddhi* to stagnate any further. I had the finest experience an actor can have working with Karan Malhotra in *Agneepath*,” Hrithik said. “I’m sure both my dear Karans (director Malhotra and producer Johar) are going to go beyond with this one. *Shuddhi* remains a part of me in spirit and I am sure it will be a landmark in our cinema. I wish them all the best,” he said. There is a buzz that Kareena would also not be a part of the film, mainly due to date issues, as the film got postponed due to Hrithik’s health. There are reports that Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone might replace Hrithik and Kareena. ●

## DiCaprio and Hill team up for another film

**Entertainment Desk**

Leonardo DiCaprio said that he and Jonah Hill are ready to team up once again to tell the story of 1996 Olympics security guard Richard Jewell. Hill is going to star as Jewell in the planned film, which was presented to the two actors while they searched for another joint project following the success of *The Wolf of Wall Street*. He said that in his opinion it was a heart-breaking story about a man becoming a hero and then the world’s biggest villain within 24

hours of each other - and then dying before he got to see his name cleared, reported a news channel. DiCaprio is believed to be both producing the film and playing Jewell’s attorney. Jewell had initially been hailed a hero for finding a suspicious looking backpack and evacuating people out of harm’s way just before a bomb exploded in the Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, killing one and injuring 111. But within days of the blast, he was named as a suspect. His name was eventually cleared but he died in 2007 at the age of 44. ●





Did you know?

Darren Bent has scored four goals at Old Trafford; more than any other visiting player in Premier League history.



# Sport



Tuesday, February 11, 2014

DHAKA TRIBUNE

13



14 Messi back in business, nets two



15 Probe implicates BCCI chief's relative in betting

## A tense Tiger camp

Mazhar Uddin, from Chittagong

It was a different atmosphere in the Bangladesh camp after they drew the second Test, with Tamim Iqbal resigning as vice-captain dominating talks, as the Tigers resumed practicing at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

The drama started after Mashrafe Mortaza was named captain for the T20 series against Sri Lanka, despite Tamim being the vice-captain. The day after the announcement, Tamim resigned as vice-captain, saying that he wanted to concentrate on his batting. In another unusual move, the players were barred from talking to the media for the next two days - a sanction that is still in play.

The day before, the media saw a new side of Shane Jurgensen, who is normally a well behaved, as the Australian lost his cool with the media for arriving at the ground as he was conducting an unofficial practice session with six players who have joined the side for the T20s. Jurgensen refused to allow the media to enter the ground after having earlier told them that there would be no practice on that day.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team came to the practice venue yesterday after Sri Lanka finished their practice session at 3.30pm. Shakib al Hasan went to the ground earlier to shoot a

TV commercial for Unicef.

The media was eager to know about the current situation in the Bangladesh camp and asked team manager M.A Awwal Chowdhury to send someone to interact with the media, but no cricketers were allowed to talk to the press, informed Awwal.

Tamim himself is suffering from a neck strain and though he took the field, did not participate in the practice session

Awwal claimed that the reason for the embargo was Jurgensen wanting the players to be fully focused on the upcoming series but it is no secret that the Tamim issue has yet to be resolved and that is the real reason.

Tamim himself is suffering from a neck strain and though he took the field, did not participate in the practice session. Shamsur Rahman was absent from the session altogether as he has a fever but will join today's session.

The tense atmosphere in the Bangladesh camp is something to worry about as the mental strain will surely affect the players in the T20 series, which begins on February 12. ●



Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga (L) plays football with teammate during a practice session at ZACS in Chittagong yesterday

COURTESY

## Tamim's batting most significant: Nazmul

Minhaz Uddin Khan

National opening batsman Tamim Iqbal resigned from the vice-captaincy post on Sunday, stating that it will give him room to concentrate on his batting. The south paw was not able to perform to expectation in the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka which Bangladesh lost 1-0.

The press however, have speculated that Tamim's decision was based on the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) naming paceman Mashrafe bin Mortaza captain for the for the two-match T20 series against Sri Lanka, which begins on February 12 at Chittagong, ahead of Tamim.

Regarding the issue, BCB president Nazmul Hasan through a media release yesterday stated - "Tamim Iqbal is a very important member of the national cricket team and he is a future leader. More than anything, it is his batting ability which is most significant to the fortunes of Bangladesh cricket."

"With a busy international season underway we felt it would be best not to burden him with the additional responsibility of captaincy in the Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka so that he could fully concentrate on his batting."

The BCB boss further said, "Masrafe bin Mortaza is the team's most senior cricketer and an inspirational figure. We are confident that he will lead the side competently with his vast experience."

The issue however, has still to be put to rest as the BCB have yet to accept or reject Tamim's resignation. ●

## Clash of the Bengals in Kolkata

Raihan Mahmood

Dhaka powerhouse Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club Ltd lock horns with Kolkata giants East Bengal in the high voltage first semi-final of the 118th IFA Shield at the Yuba Bharati Krirangan at 3:10 BST today. Jalsha Movies will transmit the match live.

Virtually it will be a duel of two Bengals and the Dhaka outfit is billed to face strict opposition as East Bengal will be determined to uphold its flag as Jamal earlier ousted another Kolkata crowd puller in Mohun Bagan. Jamal has to face fierce rivalry on and off the field as official Abdul Gaffar, a former Bangladesh international said the players had to wait for 45 minutes in the venue to get their practice slot. "We were scheduled to start our practice from 2:30 pm at the Yuba Bharati Kriangan but we saw United are possessing the field. We immediately contacted the venue official but we started our practice about 45 minutes later," said Gaffar.

Gaffar said the regular goalkeeper is

doubtful with an injury otherwise the team is in good spirits and has been boosted with the promised incentive of a bonus of USD10,000 if they win.



There is another award waiting as the team management has also declared an incentive of USD25,000 if they win the tournament. It is worth mention-

ing Dhaka Mohammedan is the Bangladeshi lone team to play in the final of the 4th oldest football tournament of the world.

Sheikh Jamal so far has been a revelation in the meet, adjusting to the conditions. They have played eye-catching football and going by the form of Haitian international forward Sony Norde, the Dhaka outfit will try to repeat the performance of the last group match against Mohun Bagan. With Norde's compatriot Wedson and Nigerian Emeka Darlington completing the three pronged attack, skipper Mamunul Islam's defence splitting crosses and through passes will be the key to Jamal's success.

However East Bengal has their arsenal boosted up with Sudanese forward James Saeed Moga, who played in Dhaka for Muktiyoddha in 2010-11 Bangladesh Premier League. There are a number of players who has played beside Moga while he donned the Muktiyoddha jersey.

Edeh Chidi, a Nigerian attacker can also create problems for the Jamal defenders. Baljit Singh, the Indian national forward, is also a reliable name in the East Bengal offence. ●

## Dilshan looks to acclimatize

Mazhar Uddin, from Chittagong

Former Sri Lankan captain and opening batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan, who joined the Lankan squad for the T20 and ODI series, informed that each game before the T20 World Championship is important for the side and in order to adjust to the weather and conditions, adding that Bangladesh are a good side in the shorter format of the game and the visitors will have to work hard to beat them at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

"Every single game now is important for us before the WC. We have to get prepared with the conditions and weather.

"They are playing very good cricket, especially in ODI and T20. We have to play our best cricket to beat Bangladesh on their soil. We can't take them easily. We will see how it goes in next couple of days," said Dilshan.

However Dilshan has played for in the Bangladesh Premier League for the Dhaka Gladiators and also Mohammedan. Last season for Mohammedan, he scored 148 runs in four matches with one fifty.

"We played a lot of cricket here on and off. Technology is there so we keep an eye on who is a newcomer. We have to play good cricket on the particular day, especially in T20. We can't make any mistakes. It is important to stay on for all 40 overs. With one month left for the World Cup, this is good for both teams," he continued.

The former captain of Sri Lanka is one of the most dashing batsmen in the shortest form of the game, boasting a strike rate over 120 and having a century to his name. Dilshan praised new captain Dinesh Chandimal, "I think he has done really well in last few series. He is learning every single game. I think it is good to give a youngster the opportunity, and he is proving to be a good captain so far," he said.

With a few other young cricketers like Kaushal Silva and Sachitra Senanayake in the side, Dilshan said it was a great chance for them to learn from veterans Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene before the big events.

"It is a good sign for us. They can learn from the likes of Sangakkara, Mahela around them. It is good for them. This series will be good



## Muktijoddha thrash Uttar Baridhara

Raihan Mahmood



Muktijoddha handed promotes Uttar Baridhara Club a lesson in standards in a 5-0 thrashing in the second match of the day in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Monday.

Earlier in the first match, Team BJMC and Brothers Union played a goalless draw.

Boosted by the two pronged attack of Nigerian attacking duo Nkwocha Kingsley and Eleta Kingsley and backed by the relentless runs of Enamul Haque and Md. Biplob and skipper Maruf Ahmed in the midfield Muktiyoddha stamped their authority on the match. Uttar Baridhara were pushed to their corner and they never came out of that.

However Muktiyoddha had to wait till the 21st minute to break the deadlock as forward Md. Biplob hit the middle of the net with a powerful right footer on a through pass from Nigerian defender Eleta Benjamin from the middle of the box. Two minutes later, Nigerian forward Nkwocha Kingsley

doubled the margin from a goal mouth melee.

Nkwocha was at his best in the 28th minute as he went past two Baridhara defenders in the left flank before putting an angular shot in the far post. Nigerian forward Eleta Kingsley added the fourth in the 66th with a header from a corner by midfielder Maruf Ahmed.

Forward Md. Biplob completed the rout and scored his second goal in the 78th minute. Midfielder Maruf Ahmed cut a through pass to Biplob whose cracking grounder gave Baridhara goalie hardly any chance to react.

Muktijoddha took their tally to 15 points from 9 matches while Uttar Baridhara remained on of 5 points from eight matches.

Earlier, BJMC dominated the scene but lacked the finishing touch while Brothers Union's counterattacking strategy also did not work.

However BJMC came close to a strike in the 81st minute of the match when defender Shananur Rahman Rony headed a Shakil Ahmed corner towards the post, but Brothers goalie Md. Shujon punched the ball to safety.

Team BJMC has 11 points from eight matches while Brothers Union has 10 points from nine matches. ●



Muktijoddha forward Md Biplob celebrates scoring during their Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League match against Uttar Baridhara Club at BNS yesterday

COURTESY





Bayern, Dortmund eye cup berths

Borussia Dortmund face mounting injury woes for Tuesday's German Cup quarter-final at Eintracht Frankfurt with Bayern Munich also out to secure their semi-final berth at Hamburg. Dortmund suffered a double injury blow over the weekend with both Germany midfielders Marco Reus and Sven Bender ruled out of the trip to Frankfurt. Left winger Reus suffered a torn right thigh in Saturday's 5-1 Bundesliga hammering of Werder Bremen and will be out for a fortnight, while defensive midfielder Bender has a thigh strain and misses the next week.

-AFP



Lisbon derby postponed

The Lisbon derby between Benfica and Sporting was postponed on Sunday, and the crowd evacuated, after high winds caused debris to fall from the roof at the venue that will host the Champions League final in May. The president of the Portuguese Football League, Mario Figueiredo, said the decision "avoided a tragedy" after pieces of glass fell to the ground. The teams had already been announced when the crowd was told the match would be delayed as wind blew debris and rubbish around the pitch. The game was then called off after the scheduled kickoff time.

-Reuters



West Ham to sell Upton Park

West Ham United have agreed to sell their ground at Upton Park to London developer Galliard Group once they have moved to the Olympic Stadium in 2016, the club announced on Monday. The club have played at the Boleyn Ground in east London for over 100 years, but will move into the focal point of the 2012 Olympic Games in time for the 2016-17 season. The stadium, built at a cost of 430 million pounds, will have a 54,000 capacity once it is converted for use by the club, who have been granted a 99-year lease.

-Reuters

Messi back in business, nets 2

Reuters, Madrid



Lionel Messi netted a superb double as Barcelona recovered from a shaky start to secure a 4-1 comeback win at rain-lashed Sevilla on Sunday that lifted the champions back to the top of La Liga.

Barca's defeat at home to Valencia last weekend meant they surrendered the lead for the first time since the beginning of last season and allowed Atletico Madrid to climb above them into first place.

Atletico crashed to a shock 2-0 reverse at promoted Almeria on Saturday

RESULTS		
Osasuna	2 0	Getafe
Oriol Riera 6, Torres 88		
Valladolid	2 2	Elche
Osorio 71, 83 Coro 34, Del Moral 66		
Real Sociedad	0 0	Levante
Sevilla	1 4	Barcelona
Moreno 15 Sanchez 34, Messi 44, 56, Fabregas 88		

and Real Madrid, 4-2 winners at home to Villarreal, were the overnight leaders.

Barca's victory at the Sanchez Pizjuan in Seville means the top three all have 57 points with 15 matches left, with Barca leading Real on goal difference and Atletico in third.

"It was important for us to get back to the top today," Barca playmaker Andres Iniesta said in an interview with Spanish television broadcaster Canal Plus.

"Leo is one of the few players who can change a game in a few minutes if you give him just a bit of space. He does it in almost every game and he did it again today."

Messi, who looks to be getting back into his stride after a two-month injury layoff, fired Barca ahead with a typically brilliant effort in 25th minute.

Win the earlier kickoffs, Real Sociedad missed a chance to close to within a point of fifth-placed Villarreal when they were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Levante. Osasuna beat visiting Getafe 2-0 and Real Valladolid came from two goals down to rescue a 2-2 draw at home to Elche on their waterlogged Jose Zorrilla pitch. ●



Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring against Sevilla during their Spanish league match at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Sevilla on Sunday

AFF

Silva lining as Monaco hit back for a draw with PSG

Reuters



A late Thiago Silva own goal cancelled out Javier Pastore's early opener as Paris St Germain drew 1-1 at Monaco on Sunday to maintain a five-point cushion over their title rivals at the top of Ligue 1.

Argentine Pastore, starting up front in the absence of the injured Edinson Cavani, headed his first league goal of the season after eight minutes.

Monaco hit back when Thiago Silva diverted Fabinho's low cross into his own net in the 74th minute before Zlatan Ibrahimovic missed a last-gasp chance to earn the leaders victory.

PSG, aiming to win back-to-back titles for the first time, have 55 points

RESULTS		
Nantes	1 2	Lyon
Djordjevic 84 Lacazette 40, B. Gomis 76-pen		
Monaco	1 1	Paris SG
Silva 74-og Pastore 8		

from 24 games with second-placed Monaco on 50.

"Monaco produced a great second half. We tried to play when we had the ball and I think it was a good match," PSG midfielder Blaise Matuidi told Canal Plus television.

"Both sides deserved a point. We are still five points ahead and that's good."

The clash between the two big-spending clubs lived up to expectations in the early stages.

PSG went ahead through Pastore af-

ter centre back Alex had nodded on a Thiago Motta corner.

Emmanuel Riviere went close to an equaliser when he missed the target after a powerful James Rodriguez effort was parried into his path.

Swedish talisman Ibrahimovic then had two good opportunities either side of halftime but was thwarted by superb saves from Monaco goalkeeper Danijel Subasic.

The home team pushed hard for an equaliser and new loan signing Dimitar Berbatov came on for Valere Germain just after the hour.

After Thiago Silva's own goal, Brazilian Fabinho was denied a goal by keeper Salvatore Sirigu with three minutes to go and then Ibrahimovic spurned another chance with seconds left. ●

'I've never seen Wenger so angry'

Reuters

Arsenal captain Mikel Arteta says he has never seen manager Arsene Wenger as angry as he was during the half-time break in Saturday's 5-1 demolition at the hands of Liverpool.

"The manager was really upset at half-time, that's normal because it wasn't good enough for this football club," Spaniard Arteta said of Wenger.

"It was the angriest I have seen him. We have had two big crises already," the former Everton midfielder added.

"I think the Manchester United defeat was a different game to this, but City and this one are really hard to take. We have to react because there is nothing we can do about this now."

Wenger did not spare their blushes in public either, saying the performance was simply not good enough. ●

Schalke earn third win in row

AFF, Berlin

Schalke 04 extended their six-match unbeaten run with a 2-0 win at home to Hanover on Sunday to stay fourth in the Bundesliga behind run-away leaders Bayern Munich.

Schalke host Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid in the last 16, first leg of the Champions League later this month and have hit form after back-to-back defeats in December with three straight wins since the winter break.

The Royal Blues put on a regal performance at Gelsenkirchen's Veltins Arena with Jefferson Farfan tapping home after a superb run from defender Sead Kolacinac on 39 minutes.

Teenage wunderkind Max Meyer added a second a minute before the break.

"That was a very good performance we put in," enthused Schalke coach Jens

RESULTS		
VfB Stuttgart	1 4	Augsburg
Rausch 62 Millik 35, Hahn 43, 56, Werner 64		
Schalke	2 0	Hanover 96
Farfan 39, Meyer 44		

Keller, who said defender Atsuto Uchida picked up a leg injury and midfielder Roman Neustadter had a badly cut knee.

The defeat ended Hanover's recent form having won their first two games of the year under new coach Tayfun Korkut to leave the guests lying tenth.

Earlier, ten-man VfB Stuttgart dropped closer to the Bundesliga's relegation battle after suffering their fifth-straight defeat in a 4-1 rout at home to buoyant Augsburg. "There's no need to discuss the performance," fumed Stuttgart coach Thomas Schneider. ●



Paris Saint-Germain's Zlatan Ibrahimovic (C) challenges Monaco's Ricardo Carvalho (L) and Moutinho during their French Ligue 1 match at the Louis II stadium in Monaco on Sunday

REUTERS

Don't write off 'hurting' United says Moyes

AFF, Manchester

Manchester United manager David Moyes insists his team still believe they can trouble the Premier League's best side's despite their miserable start to 2014.

They are nine points adrift of fourth-placed Liverpool and travel to Arsenal on Wednesday hoping to get their push for a Champions League place back on track. But despite failing to beat teams like Swansea, Stoke, Sunderland and Fulham since the start of

the year, Moyes maintains he still has confidence in his players.

He said: "We just go into the next game and take the teams on and challenge them. We've got a good team and there will be very few teams desperate to play Manchester United. The players are hurting. I can see every day that they're hurting because the results aren't going the way they want.

"They're really good professionals in the way they go about their work and what I see in training makes me feel they'll get results." ●

Dreamer Hazard gunning for West Brom

AFF, West Bromwich



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho may have played down his side's Premier League title chances, but in-form forward Eden Hazard admits that he has been dreaming of winning the league.

Hazard's hat-trick in the 3-0 win over Newcastle United on Saturday means that Mourinho's side will travel to West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday a point clear at the head of the table with a third of the season remaining.

The run-in is about to gather pace and

FIXTURES		
Cardiff City	v	Aston Villa
Hull City	v	Southampton
West Ham United	v	Norwich City
West Brom	v	Chelsea

the Belgium winger has revealed that thoughts of lifting the championship trophy are already disturbing his sleep.

Following the weekend win, Hazard told Chelsea TV: "Top of the league. I go in my bed, I dream. I hope at the end of the season it will be the same.

"It's a pleasure to play for this team and to work for that."

juncture. Barca suffered a surprise wobble in La Liga at the beginning of the month, losing 3-2 at home to Valencia, but have made serene progress in the Cup and returned to the top of the league thanks to Sunday's impressive 4-1 comeback win at Sevilla.

Their four-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi has taken time to get back into his stride following a two-month injury layoff around the turn of the year but his superb double in Seville suggested he is not far off his scintillating best.

"If anyone says anything negative about him all they are doing is provoking him," Barca coach Gerardo Martino, who hails from Messi's home town of Rosario in Argentina, told a news conference.

"And if you provoke the world's best player his next opponent will have a problem.

"He is always decisive, even if it is merely a matter of dragging opposition players into the centre and anything

that distracts their attention is positive."

Real also look to have their latest "galactico" signing, Wales winger Gareth Bale, back to full fitness after a series of minor niggles.

The world's most expensive player opened the scoring in Saturday's 4-2 La Liga win at home to Villarreal and set up Karim Benzema for the second of the night.

"I scored a fantastic goal and made an assist," Bale told reporters. "I am very pleased and available for the coach for our upcoming games.

"I am working hard on the pitch and in every training session so I can be in the team."

Once the Cup semi-finals are out of the way, Barca have one more La Liga game, at home to struggling Rayo Vallecano, before they play at Manchester City in the last 16 of the Champions League on Feb. 18.

Real play at Getafe and host Elche in La Liga before their trip to Germany to meet Schalke 04 on Feb. 26. ●

Sherwood backs Adebayor

AFF, London

Tim Sherwood believes Tottenham will qualify for the Champions League if Emmanuel Adebayor continues to produce the kind of lethal finishing that earned a crucial 1-0 win against Everton.

If Tottenham do land a lucrative place in Europe's elite club competition, Sherwood is convinced Adebayor, who was frozen out by former boss Villas-Boas, will have a significant role to play.

"I know he did well over a whole season for Arsenal in the past and I'm hoping he will do that here," Sherwood said. ●



QUICK BYTES

Jabbar Memorial Tennis

The men's qualifying round of the Jabbar Memorial Tennis started at the Engineers Recreation Center yesterday. Zain Omar, Shafikul Islam Rumman, Zakir Hossain, Zamir Bashar, Abdul Awal, Channu Lal, Kawsar Ali and Niranjan Ram won their respective matches to cruise through to the final round. The main draw of the men's and women's section starts today.

-RM

Shirin remains sole leader

Reigning champion Sharmin Sultana Shirin remained at the top in the Sultana Kamal 34<sup>th</sup> National Women Chess Championship with maximum four points at the end of the fourth round at the chess federation hall room yesterday. Last year's runner-up WIM Shamima Akter Liza, WFM Zakia Sultana and WFM Tanima Parveen were jointly in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position with 3 points each. In the 4<sup>th</sup> round, Shirin beat Jahanara Haque Runu, Liza defeated Kiswara Shajrin Evana, Tanima beat Mahmuda Hoque Chowdhury Moly Zakia drew with WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva drew with Samiha Sharmin Shimmi and Dilara Jahan Nupur beat Hamida Rahman.

-RM

Injured Robinho facing more tests

Brazilian forward Robinho could be a doubt for the visit of AC Milan's Champions League last 16 opponents Atletico Madrid next week after suffering a thigh knock on Saturday. Robinho was replaced for the second half of Milan's 3-1 defeat to Napoli by compatriot Kaka and is set to undergo further tests on a left thigh injury. An official statement by Milan said: "AC Milan communicates that during the Napoli-Milan match, Robinho suffered a muscular injury in his left thigh. "The Brazilian striker will undergo further tests next week." Italian media reports claim Robinho will miss Friday's home game against Bologna and that he is a major doubt for the visit of Atletico on February 19.

-AFP

New Pakistan coach will not be foreigner

The Pakistan Cricket Board has ruled out appointing a foreign coach for the national team. Former test captains Intikhab Alam and Wasim Akram, who are on the four-member committee formed to evaluate and recommend the new coaching team, said none of the shortlisted candidates were foreigners. "We received a total of 25 applications and after evaluation we have shortlisted some candidates and none are foreigners," Alam told a news conference in Lahore on Sunday. The PCB is due to appoint a new head coach, batting coach and fielding coach for the national side on Monday.

-Reuters

Walker holds on for Pro-Am win

Jimmy Walker let a big lead shrink, but held on for a one-shot victory at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, his third win in eight US PGA Tour starts this season. Walker carded a two-over par 74 in the final round for an 11-under par total of 276, rolling in a five-footer for par at the 72nd hole to claim the trophy. Two-time Pebble Beach Pro-Am winner Dustin Johnson and Jim Renner tied for second at 277, Johnson climbing up the leaderboard with a 66 and Renner carding a 77. Walker had held a six-shot lead when the third round in the weather-disrupted tournament was wrapped up on Sunday morning. Walker had come from behind in his prior two victories this season .

-AFP

DAY'S WATCH

Sony Six

NBA 2013-14

7:00AM

Minnesota v Houston

9:30AM

Golden State v Philadelphia

Star Sports 4

3:00PM

Sochi Winter Olympic

Games Day 4

2:00AM

English Premier League

West Brom v Chelsea

Star Sports HD1

8:30PM

Hockey India League

1:45AM

English Premier League

Hull City v Southampton



Australia all-rounder Shane Watson talks with coach Darren Lehman during a nets session at Centurion Park in Centurion yesterday ahead of the South Africa Test series

INTERNET

Probe implicates BCCI chief's relative in IPL betting

AFP, New Delhi

The newly-elected boss of world cricket N. Srinivasan suffered a blow on Monday when an Indian Supreme Court panel probing a match-fixing scandal said his son-in-law was guilty of illegal betting on games.

After an extensive probe, the three-member panel also said allegations of match-fixing against Gurunath Meiyappan during the Indian Premier League required further investigation, the Press Trust of India reported.

The panel, headed by retired judge Mukul Mudgal, suggested that Meiyappan may have passed on information to outsiders for betting during the Twenty20 competition, the news agency said.

Meiyappan was the team principal of Chennai Super Kings, an IPL franchise owned by Srinivasan's India Cements company and captained by national skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

The court had appointed the panel on October 8 to investigate the scandal that rocked the popular tournament run by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) last year.

The probe was separate from investigations by police, who have filed charges in court against a string of officials, players and bookmakers for illegal betting during the tournament.

Meiyappan has been charged by Mumbai police with forgery, cheating, criminal conspiracy, breach of contract and handing critical team information to alleged bookmakers.



Singh Khehar on Monday.

The court will take up the report on March 7.

The panel dismissed Srinivasan's claim that Meiyappan was merely a cricket enthusiast, saying he was the face of the franchise.

It also said Srinivasan himself faced a conflict of interest by being the BCCI president and also the owner of the IPL franchise, "a serious issue" that needed to be considered by the court.

The revelations came just days after Srinivasan was chosen as the first chairman of the International Cricket Council in a controversial shake-up of the governance and structure of cricket's world body.

The shake-up was approved by the ICC's executive board on Saturday.

Monfils beats holder Gasquet to win Montpellier title

Reuters, Paris

Frenchman Gael Monfils overwhelmed compatriot and defending champion Richard Gasquet 6-4 6-4 in the Montpellier International tournament final on Sunday to claim his first title in more than two years.

Monfils relied on his powerful serve to dominate world number nine Gasquet and clinch the fifth ATP title of his career, the second at the Montpellier hard-court indoor event where he had won in 2010. "This is unbelievable for me," Monfils told reporters. "I had some back problems at the beginning of the week and I didn't know if I was going to be able to play, so to now have the trophy is pretty crazy."

The 30th-ranked Frenchman, who has suffered from a series of injuries in the past two years, looks back to his best and now has a 12-2 win-loss record so far this season. His two defeats have come at the hand of world number one Rafael Nadal, who beat him in the Doha Open final and the Australian Open third round last month. On Sunday, Monfils looked in control throughout, striking nine aces, and did not offer Gasquet a single break chance.

Pietersen axed over Cook concerns: ECB

AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen's England career was brought to an end due to concerns about his support for captain Alastair Cook, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) revealed on Sunday. Pietersen confirmed that he would no longer play for England last Tuesday after the South Africa-born batsman was left out of the England squads for the tour of the Caribbean and the ICC World Twenty20.

However, following calls for an explanation from players including former England captains Ian Botham and Michael Vaughan, the ECB issued a joint statement with the Professional Cricketers' Association. "The ECB recognises the significant contribution Kevin has made to England teams over the last decade," the statement read.

"He has played some of the finest innings ever produced by an England batsman. However, the England team needs to rebuild after the whitewash in Australia. To do that we must invest in our captain Alastair Cook and we must support him in creating a culture in which we can be confident he will have the

ICC revamp good for the game, says India's Srinivasan

AFP, New Delhi

A controversial shake-up of the governance and structure of cricket's world body will benefit the game and ensure its financial health, India's powerful boss N. Srinivasan said on Monday.

"I think it's good for cricket overall, good for the financial health of all full, associate and affiliate members. There is meritocracy," Srinivasan told The Hindu newspaper.

Srinivasan, asked if he will try to convince Pakistan and Sri Lanka to come on board, said it was for the entire ICC, and not him alone, to work on it. It's an ICC resolution and eight members have approved it. It (reaching out to Sri Lanka and Pakistan) is not just my responsibility. It's for everybody to work on."

Srinivasan, who heads the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), defended Cricket South Africa's last-minute decision to vote in favour of the revamp after it had supported Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the lead up to the meeting.

"Maybe some members had some lingering doubts on the proposals. When the doubts got clarified, the proposals found support."

Srinivasan vehemently denied accusations that the cricket boards of India, Australia and England had formed an oligarchy, which could even veto suggestions made by other members.

Booze-up costs Ryder, Bracewell Test spot

AFP, Auckland

Troublesome New Zealand cricketers Jesse Ryder and Doug Bracewell are out of the second Test against India, coach Mike Hesson said Monday, as details emerged of a late-night drinking spree.

The pair have admitted drinking in a bar just hours before the start of the first Test last week, amid reports they were also involved in a scuffle, with Bracewell now nursing an injured hand and broken foot. CCTV footage has also been released showing Ryder, who has a history of alcohol-fuelled incidents, needing assistance to get into a taxi at 3:00am after the one-day match against India in Auckland last month.

The drinking sessions have infuriated the rest of the New Zealand team as they overshadow media coverage of their dramatic 40-run win in the first Test with a day to spare.

Ashraf removed as Pakistan tussle goes on

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday removed the country's cricket chief Zaka Ashraf in the latest twist to the long-running saga dogging the national board.

It is the second time in less than a year that Ashraf has been unseated as chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which will be run for now by an 11-strong interim committee appointed by Sharif.

Ashraf's removal by a court order in May last year due to doubts over his election kicked off a series of legal challenges that critics say has damaged the sport in Pakistan.

A notice from the prime minister, who is also patron of the PCB, confirmed Ashraf's removal.

"Prime Minister has removed Ashraf from his post as PCB chairman and has appointed a 11-man interim committee to run cricket affairs," Irfanullah Khan, lawyer for Inter-Provincial Committee (IPC) told AFP.

"The PM has amended the PCB constitution, under which the decision of Ashraf's removal was made."

The IPC runs sports affairs in the



country and last week sent a summary on Ashraf's removal to the PM.

The reasons for Ashraf's removal are still unknown but sources pointed to Ashraf's failure to give Pakistan a strong voice at a crucial International Cricket Council (ICC) meeting in Singapore on Saturday.

The ICC approved a controversial revamp at the meeting which gave major powers and revenues to the so-called "Big Three" of world cricket -- India, Australia and England.

The interim committee has the power to select a chairman, with journalist Naji Sethi favourite to regain the post.

Knapp puts holders Italy into Fed Cup semi-finals

AFP, Cleveland

Karin Knapp survived some shaky moments to defeat American Alison Riske 6-3, 7-5 on Sunday and put defending champions Italy into the semi-finals of the Fed Cup.

Knapp's triumph gave Italy an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the best-of-five match tie.

The Italian, ranked 40th in the world, had helped the visitors take a commanding 2-0 lead on Saturday with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 victory over Christina McHale in the opening match.

Camila Giorgi, ranked 84th, then downed 37th-ranked US teen Madison Keys 6-2, 6-1, in only one hour in a matchup of Fed Cup debutantes.

In the meaningless doubles match, Keys and Lauren Davis teamed up to beat Nastassja Burnett and Alice Matteucci 6-2, 6-3 and prevent the whitewash, giving Italy a final 3-1 triumph.

In a desperate bid to keep the tie alive, US captain Mary Joe Fernandez opted to replace Keys in Sunday's reverse singles, hoping that Riske's more aggressive style would put more pressure on Knapp.



The Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad ASM Firoze (C) releases a Pigeon to open the Annual Sports of Oxford International School at the Physical Training College, Mohammedpur yesterday

COURTESY

Oxford Int. School Annual Sports held

Raihan Mahmood

Endorsing the spirit of sports, the Annual Sports of Oxford International School concluded at the Physical Training College, Mohammedpur yesterday.

The Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad A.S.M Firoze was the chief guest of the meet that comprised of around 3,000 students of the five campuses of the school. A total of 525 prizes were distributed in the 180 events of the meet. The principal of the school Prof. Shahidul Alam Monzu and the coordinator of the meet Osman Ghani Azam Khan were also present on the occasion.



# Dhaka active to secure funds for combating extremism

Fund to get support from 20 countries, famous brands

**Sheikh Shahariar Zaman**

Bangladesh is actively working with other countries to secure money from a global fund to combat violent extremism at the community level.

Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque is scheduled to go to Washington next week to attend a preliminary meeting of Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, an initiative to counter violent extremism.

"It is a good initiative and Bangladesh is smart to take advantage of it. Now other countries are coming too," US Ambassador to Dhaka Dan Mozena told the Dhaka Tribune.

Mozena said the initiative was a

public-private partnership for helping communities become resilient to the threats of violent extremism.

The global fund, initiated by the US and Turkey last September, was supported by over 20 countries and a group of famous brands. Initially it has plans to raise \$200m to support pilot projects.

Bangladesh has met all the criteria to get money from the global fund, which is expected to be floated in June, said a foreign ministry official who has knowledge on the issue.

The fund would go to non-government organisations of any developing country that faces the threat of extremism, and Bangladesh fulfilled all the requirements, he said.

"Two meetings of the fund had already been held in Switzerland, where Bangladesh actively took part and helped others to give it a concrete shape," the diplomat said. At the initial level, five to seven countries would get fund for different pilot projects and Bangladesh would be one of them, he added.

Several big companies have already showed interest in contributing to the fund as the private sector was the worst sufferer of extremism, the diplomat said.

"Business incurs loss because of extremism, and the big brands think that if it can be contained at the community level by engaging people, it is worth contributing for the cause," the foreign ministry official added. ●

## Saudi Arabia to hire Bangladeshi health professionals

**Moniruzzaman Uzzal**

Saudi Health Minister Abdullah Abdulaziz M Al Rabeeah has expressed his country's willingness to work with Bangladesh's health sector, collaborate in medical training and research, and hire more doctors and health professionals from the country.

He made the comments during a meeting with Bangladeshi Health Minister Mohammed Nasim, at his office in Riyadh on Sunday.

A press release, issued yesterday by the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh, said Mohammed Nasim made an official visit to Saudi Arabia over February 7-9.

During the bilateral meeting, both ministers agreed to enhance cooperation in the health sector by sharing experiences, training, research and promoting the collaboration of medical practitioners from both countries.

Nasim sought the support of Saudi Arabian for the recognition of Bangladeshi medical degrees such as MS, MD and FCPS, which would allow Bangladeshi doctors to work in Saudi Arabia.

Rabeeah underlined the need for regular, and increased, interaction between health professionals of both countries, to better understand the needs of health services.

The Saudi health minister expressed interest in hiring qualified graduate nurses for his country's expanded medical services.

Both ministers agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding on health cooperation, and to implement the proposals that had been agreed on through diplomatic channels.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Nasim also held a meeting with Sulaiman Al-Emran, the acting secretary general of the Saudi Commission of Health Specialties, which is the country's sole body of accreditation and licensing for medical doctors and other health professionals. ●

## Top PDB officials under ACC radar

**Syed Samiul Basher Anik**

The Anti-Corruption Commission is scrutinising a graft allegation against three top officials of the Power Division, including its Secretary Monowar Islam, on charges of "embezzling" a huge sum of money, an ACC official has said.

Seeking anonymity, the deputy director-level official said the commission recently received an allegation against Power Division Secretary Monowar Islam, Additional Secretary Taposh Kumer Ray and Joint Secretary (development) Anwar Hossain, of embezzling money from donations that was given for celebrating the "Achievement of 10,000MW power generation milestone" and observing the "National Electricity Week 2013."

To celebrate both the programmes, the ministry received around Tk10 crore in donations, among which, more than half was embezzled by the three officials, the allegation said.

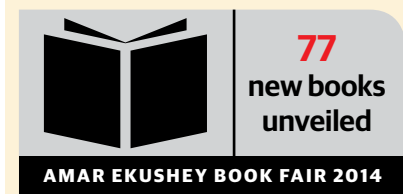
The donations included Tk4 crore from different government organisations including Bangladesh Power Development Board, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh, Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited, Dhaka Power Distribution Company, Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh, Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited, and Rural Power Company Limited. The other Tk6 crore came from different private organizations, including Summit Group, Orion Group and S Alam Group.

Though Tk10 crore was collected to observe the programmes, only Tk3-4 crore was spent by the Power Division officials and the rest of the money was embezzled by the three officials, the allegation read.

A commission panel was now scrutinising the allegation, and if the panel found evidences of irregularity, the commission will approve a formal probe against the Power Division officials, said the ACC official. ●



## Habibur Rahman remembered



**Ahmed Zayeeef**

The love and respect shown for the late writer, language movement hero and former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair this year was remarkable.

Two large portraits of the veteran marked both entrances of the book fair.

Remembering the noble man, Shamsuzzaman Khan, Director General of Bangla Academy, said: "He used to visit the fair regularly. For many years he attended a lot of discussions held at the fair. He not only fought for the language but also contributed to the progress of Bangla language and culture until his death. I miss his presence this year."

Bangla Academy has brought out a total

of six books written by the veteran author this year, including "Gongoridhdhi theke bangladesh" and "Bangladesh Shongbidhaner shobdo o khondobakko."

"He will remain alive in the hearts of book lovers through his resourceful writings," added the Bangla Academy director.

Graduating in history and law, Justice Habibur Rahman wrote 70 books in Bangla on law, language, literature, poetry and religion and five books in English. While walking through the fair this correspondent found a number of people buying his books.

A visitor Nurul Alam Pathan bought Habibur Rahman's "Amra ki jabona tader kache jara bangla bhashay kotha bole?" published by University Press limited (UPL), and dedicated to Professor Abdur Razzak, a late noted scholar of the country.

Nurul Alam said: "He [Habibur Rahman] was a man with different thoughts. His writings inspire me to think about the Bangla language and its history." UPL has published Habibur Rahman's 5 books including "Rabindra rochonay aini vabona," "Jothashobdo" and

"On rights and remedies."

Mohiuddin Ahmed, managing director of UPL, said: "He was the most senior author among us. I have a lot of memories with him."

Ahmed Mahmudul Hoque, a publisher at Mawla Brothers, which published 24 of his books, told the Dhaka Tribune that Habibur used to spend little time inside stalls.

A total of 77 new books were published on the tenth day of the fair yesterday, including Taslima Nasrin's "Kothiner korikathe" which is available at the Nondita Prokash, Ahsan Habi's "Ek dojon muchki hashir golpo" available at Kali o Kolom Prokashona, and Dr Ahmed Sharif's "Oprokashito rajnotik o onnanno rochona: rajnotik shongkot" available at Mohakal Prokashoni. A discussion on Arit Kumar Guha was held at the central stage presided over by cultural personality Kamal Lohani, and was attended by Ramendu Majumdar, president of the International Theatre Institute, and Journalist Abed Khan. ●



Scores of visitors crowd the Dhaka International Trade Fair on its last day, in the capital yesterday

**RAJIB DHAR**

## Fire destroys their dreams too...

**Tazlina Zamila Khan**

The devastating fire at Jheelpar slum in the capital's Modhubagh not only destroyed belongings but also the dreams of hundreds of people. Everything except the clothes they were wearing was burnt to ashes in the fire that broke out on Saturday.

During a visit to the slum yesterday the Dhaka Tribune found that many slum dwellers were searching for their belongings, in the hope that something could be salvaged.

Moreover, many were looking at the gutted houses, where once they lived, with blank expressions.

People were screaming with fear at what the future holds for them.

**'My child cannot walk and work. The compensation is not enough for us. We have been bearing losses'**

Around 1,000 people from 400 families, which included pregnant women and disabled residents, became homeless after the fire burned down over 600 shanties.

Asma Sultana, 30, a pregnant woman, said, "I, along with my husband, was very excited about our upcoming baby. We have saved Tk50,000 for hospital costs and our baby's future, but all of our money was destroyed."

"With only two months until my baby is born, how will we manage for money? Where will I take shelter with my new born baby?" she asked, breaking into tears.

Shahina Begum, manager of Brac's Modhubagh branch, said, "We have identified five pregnant women. We will provide cost-free treatment and post-delivery healthcare services to them."

Most of the victims of the fire had taken shelter at the T&T school auditorium. Since the fire, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal has helped the victims by providing Kichuri for them to eat. Romna Thana Hawkers' League Committee Secretary Subul Sheikh said, "The meals will continue for the next two days."

Three Hindu families from the slum are experiencing the toughest

time, as they have been neglected by the people providing assistance.

As the correspondent was talking with them, another slum dweller, Shameli, interrupted the conversation and asked them what they had lost in the fire.

She also said: "You are lucky; we are permitting you to stay here."

Nomita Rani Das and Shefali Rani Das said the other slum dwellers always tried to quarrel with them over trivial matters.

Shefali Rani Das, who is a garment worker, asked, "Has anyone asked about us? Everyone here is getting something; how long can we survive with empty hands? Local people stole our kitchen utensils while people were busy dousing the fire."

Children, whose books have been burnt in the fire, said the government should provide new books for them.

Purnima, a student of class V, said: "All of my books were destroyed. I love studying and going to school. I am dismayed at losing my books."

Breaking down into tears another victim, Rumila, said the money kept for the treatment of her physically-challenged child was lost. Every month she takes Rubel, 14, to a herbal practitioner for his treatment.

She said: "My child cannot walk and work. The compensation is not enough for us. We have been bearing huge losses. Nothing is left for us."

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society gave family kits and health kits to the 200 worst effected victims. Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury Maya gave Tk3,000 and 20kg of rice to each family.

Under the 'One House One Farm' project, they will encourage the victims to move back to their native villages, where the government will build houses and arrange jobs for them, he added.

Many victims said they were yet to get any help as their names had not been added to the relevant lists.

Shopna asked, "Where is my compensation? Most of the victims did not get anything. The government is pretending, for the media, that they are doing a lot for the fire victims. But the reality is that many people have got nothing."

The family of three-year old child, Sabuj, who died in the accident, went to their hometown in Mymensingh for his burial. ●

## Telecom and ICT ministries merged together

**Muhammad Zahidul Islam**

The government has merged the posts and telecommunications ministry and the information and communication technology ministry into one - a decision that has been hailed by both the industries as a milestone towards "enhancing the digitisation programme."

The unified Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology will reduce wastage of resources and efforts, leaders of the two industries say.

A government handout yesterday said the new ministry would have two

divisions - the Posts and Telecommunications Division and the Information and Communication Technology Division.

Abdul Latif Siddiqui was the minister for both the ministries and remains in charge of the new one. Zunaid Ahmed Palak was the state minister for the ICT ministry. The government handout does not clarify Zunaid's status.

The last caretaker government took an initiative in 2008 to bring the ICT and telecom ministries under a single umbrella.

"We took the initiative to bring all digital supports under a single ministry but it did not happen at that time," Maj

Gen (retd) Manjurul Alam, then chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, told the Dhaka Tribune yesterday.

"It was badly needed for us and I want to congratulate the government for fulfilling the industry's desire."

"It will reduce wastage of efforts and help use optimum opportunities," he said.

Mustafa Jabbar, president of Bangladesh Computer Samity, said: "The telecom sector cannot run without the help of ICT, and at the same time, the ICT cannot run without telecom services...Now we can run faster."

## Minor domestic help succumbs to burn injury

**Tarek Mahmud, Chittagong**

A 10-year-old domestic help succumbed to burn injuries at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Tamanna, the second among four children of domestic worker Saleha Begum and rickshaw van driver Md Momin, was engaged as a domestic help at a tender age because of poverty.

She used to work at the residence of Ayesha Akter in Shulakbahar area in the port city.

On January 25, lying on the bed of CMCH with 40% burn injury, Tamanna said she caught fire from a gas stove while boiling water.

She said on January 24, Ayesha had asked her to boil water and after she boiled it, Ayesha beat her up saying that the water was not boiled properly.

"Then she [Ayesha] ordered me to boil the water again. In the kitchen, while lighting the stove, my clothes caught fire," said Tamanna while withering in pain.

Ayesha said the fire spread all over Tamanna's body as she panicked and ran to and fro.

"Hearing her screaming we rushed to the kitchen and doused the fire," she said.

Tamanna was admitted to CMCH with burn injuries on neck, chest, ab-

domen, back and hands.

Dr Mishma Islam, medical officer at the Burn and Plastic Surgery unit of CMCH, said Tamanna's condition was critical as 40% of her body was burnt and she had died around 4am yesterday.

Tamanna's mother Saleha Begum said Ayesha had been torturing Tamanna since she joined work on December 16 last year.

"When I went to the house three to four days ago, Tamanna was crying to return with me as she did not want to stay there. Ayesha used to torture her both physically and mentally over trivial matters," she said.

On January 27, this correspondent



Continue to the  
Business section...



**Dhaka**  
**Tribune**  
Business





**B3** Toyota to stop making cars in Australia from 2017



**B4** Here comes the euro zone growth data

# GSP talks at Ticfa meet hinge on US desire

Asif Showkat Kallol

If the United States does not want, talks on regaining the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) will not be possible at the first meeting of Ticfa likely to be held in Dhaka on April 7, commerce ministry officials said.

Bangladesh wants to raise the issue at the meeting of the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (Ticfa), but it would depend on the willingness of the US authorities, they said.

Recently, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed spoke about the government plan to raise the issue at the meeting.

The US suspended the trade preferences for Bangladeshi products in June last year as Bangladesh “failed to improve labour conditions, especially in the garment sector.”

The GSP, however, does not cover the garment products that constitute the largest share of the country’s total export volume.

“We are yet unsure whether the GSP talks could be included in the meeting,” Commerce Secretary Mahbub Ahmed told the Dhaka Tribune.

The office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) will send the meeting agenda to Bangladesh, he said. “If it does not include the matter, Bangladesh would propose to discuss the issue. But the USTR’s final consent is necessary in this regard.”

Bangladesh may need to attend GSP hearing in Washington for having the facility reinstated. GSP for other countries have also been postponed by the US for a review.

Following a meeting with the US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena last week, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said: “A commitment has been adopted at the Bali Conference [WTO] that duty-free and quota-free market access will be given to the least developed countries. This will be discussed as the main agenda at the Ticfa meeting.”

Bangladesh and the US signed Ticfa on November 25 last year and it became effective from January 30 this year.

## ACTION PLAN TO GET BACK GSP

### IMPROVE FACTORY SAFETY

- Develop, in consultation with the International Labor Organization (ILO), and implement in line with already agreed targets
- Increase fines and other sanctions
- Develop, in consultation with the ILO, and implement in line with already agreed targets
- Create a publicly accessible database/matrix of all RMG/knitwear factories as a platform for reporting labour, fire, and building inspections
- Establish directly or in consultation with civil society an effective complaint mechanism

### ALLOW TRADE UNIONISM

- Enact and implement, in consultation with the ILO, labour law reforms to address key concerns related to freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Continue to expeditiously register unions that present applications that meet administrative requirements, and ensure protection of unions and their members from anti-union discrimination
- Publicly report information on the status, final outcomes of individual union registration applications
- Register non-governmental labour organisations that meet administrative requirements
- Publicly report on the database/matrix identified above on anti-union discrimination or other unfair labor practice complaints received and labor inspections completed
- Develop and implement mechanisms, including a training program for industrial police officers who oversee the RMG sector

### ENSURE EPZ WORKERS' RIGHTS

- Commit to a timeline for expeditiously bringing the EPZ law into conformity with int. standards
- Issue regulations that, until the EPZ law has been repealed, will ensure the following
  - Protection of EPZ workers' freedom of association
  - Transparency in the enforcement of the existing EPZ law

### PROTECT SHRIMP PROCESSING SECTOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

- Actively support ILO and other worker-employer initiatives in the shrimp sector
- Publicly report on anti-union discrimination or other unfair labour practice complaints received

Photo: Syed Zakir Hossain, Infograph: Tahmidur Rahman/Dhaka Tribune

## FIRST TICFA MEETING ON APRIL 7 IN DHAKA

A delegation, including a group of private investors, from the US is scheduled to visit Dhaka from April 6.

Tofail is hopeful that GSP will be regained by Bangladesh in the US market. “We have fulfilled many [of their] conditions and we will try to fulfill the rest by April,” he said.

After suspension of GSP, Washington asked Dhaka to make progress in

16 areas to have GSP back.

Dan Mozena said the next review of the GSP would be held in May, when it would be based on information submitted by April 15.

In an effort to lessen their tax burden, a host of American companies and trade organisations recently urged the US Congress to immediately restart the GSP programme that expired for all

countries on July 31 last year.

“Over the past five and a half months, American companies like ours—and our members—have paid nearly \$2m per day in higher taxes while waiting for Congress to renew the programme. We cannot afford to wait any longer,” said the 463 signatories in a letter to the US Congress on January 27. ●

# Exports expected to be doubled in 5 years as DITF concludes

Tribune Report

The country’s export earning is expected to be doubled in five years to US\$50bn as the month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2014 concluded in Dhaka yesterday.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed expressed the high hope based on the success what the private sector has achieved so far, particularly in the first half of the current fiscal year, despite the hartals and blockades ahead of the January 5 election.

“Our businessmen are very efficient and our apparel sector has gained a reputation in the world market to make it possible,” he told the concluding ceremony.

The commerce minister was encouraged by the export figures that also doubled in last five years to around \$27bn in the fiscal 2012-13, rising from \$14bn in 2008-09.

He expected the export target for the current fiscal year of \$30.5bn would be achieved as half the target already been achieved in the hartal and blockade-affected first half of the fiscal year. The July-December exports register \$14.69bn.

“The export growth will continue and may even cross the target,” Tofail said, expressing his confidence on new-found duty-free markets in South Korea, China, Japan and Australia.



Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed distributes crest among the well-performing stalls at Dhaka International Trade Fair. A total of 71 participating companies were awarded in 12 categories as the month-long trade fair concluded yesterday

RAJIB DHAR

“We’re now working on tapping the opportunities offered by the Bali package of World Trade Organisation (WTO). The country’s exports will expand if these are implemented properly.”

Commerce Secretary Mahbub Ahmed, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Kazi Akram Uddin and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Vice Chairman Subhasish Bose were, among others, present at the closing

ceremony.

The annual event bagged spot export orders of Tk80.44 crore and collected VAT (value added tax) of about Tk1.5 crore.

A total of 309 organisations took part at the fair, including 73 pavilions of local and foreign countries, 28 mini-pavilions and 205 stalls.

A total of 47 enterprises and 24 service providers have been awarded in 12 categories. ●

## Grameenphone recommends 50% cash dividend

Muhammad Zahidul Islam

Grameenphone has recommended final cash dividend at 50% for the year ended on December 31, 2013.

The decision was taken at the board meeting of the largest telecom operator in Dhaka yesterday.

Earlier, they distributed interim cash dividend of 90%, making a total of 140% cash dividend for the year, a senior executive of the company told the Dhaka Tribune.

The company’s earnings per share is Tk10.89, which was Tk12.96 in 2012, while net assets stood at Tk3,100 crore after 31 December 2013, meeting sources said. ●

## DSE polls tomorrow

Tribune Report

Election of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) will be held tomorrow with six candidates contesting for four directorship posts in the demutualised stock exchange.

Voters numbering more than 240 will be able to cast their votes from 10 am to 4:30 pm without break.

This year, DSE’s election has created a great enthusiasm among the voters as the bourse will form its 13-member board for the first time after demutualisation.

# Tofail hopes to get back US GSP

Ibrahim Hossain Ovi

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has once again expressed his optimism to get back the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for Bangladeshi products in the US market.

“We have already fulfilled 13 conditions, out of 16, set out by the US administration to regain the GSP facilities,” he said in Dhaka yesterday.

He was talking to the reporters after a meeting with a delegation from Foreign Investors’ Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at the Commerce Ministry. FICCI President Rupali Chowdhury led the delegation.

“The remaining three pre-conditions will also be fulfilled by April,” he said. The conditions are appointing 200 more fire inspectors, allowing trade unions at the RMG factories located in EPZ areas and giving clarification on the US allegation against the alleged tortures on the workers in some factories.

Regarding appointment of the fire inspectors, the minister said it is a long procedure to follow in appointing the fire inspectors. The government has already discussed the matter at the cabinet meeting and decided to hold talks with the Public Service Commission (PSC) as to how those inspectors can be appointed within the stipulated timeframe.

“We are also considering to seek special administrative authority of the

Prime Minister to resolve the crisis over fire inspector appointment.”

As far as the US allegation on the tortures of the workers is concerned, the Tofail said 19 factories have so far been identified in the wake of the US allegation of tortures on RMG workers.

He would call all the owners of the factories along with the president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Atiqul Islam for seeking more clarification on the untoward incidents.

About the trade union issue, Tofail said: “There has been no such provision for introducing trade union in the EPZ areas under the existing EPZ law, but if we can implement labour law everywhere and ensure workers’ rights including in EPZs, we will be able to get back our GSP facilities.”

The minister also informed that he would hold a meeting tomorrow with the stakeholders to discuss about the progress of action plan imposed by the US government, which also halted the GSP facilities of Bangladeshi goods in the US market on June 27, 2012.

Regarding foreign investment, the minister claimed that a good number of foreign investors have shown their keen interest to invest in Bangladesh as the political scenario has been improved in the previous weeks.

During the meeting, the FICCI delegation urged the commerce minister to create a level playing business environment for the foreign investors. ●

# Rural savers' bank to start journey from July

Asif Showkat Kallol

The PalliSanchay Bank, a proposed bank to encourage rural savings, will start operation in the first week of July as the current parliament session is expected to pass a related bill.

A temporary head office of the bank will be set up at Bangladesh Rural Development Board office in the capital’s Karwan Bazar area, with branches across 19 districts of the country.

“The specialised bank is going to begin operation in the first week of this July,” MA QuaderSarker, secretary of Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, told the Dhaka Tribune yesterday.

He said the division had already sought land from the government to establish a head office in Dhaka.

According to the PalliSanchay Bank Bill, the bank derives from the government’s “One House, One Farm” project. Last week State Minister for Finance MA Mannan saidthe bill would be placed and passed in the current session.

On November 11 last year, the cabinet approved the draft law for the rural savers’ bank after the law ministry’s vetting.

The “One House, One Farm” is a project under the Annual Development

Programme (ADP), the first phase of which started in 1997 during Awami League (AL) government. The second phase of the project started after the AL-led grand alliance government came to power in 2009.

The government will hold 51% of the bank’s ownership and the remaining 49% would go to the 17,300 member cooperative societies of the “One House, One Farm” project.

However, the government will not take any dividends against its shares.

As per the draft law, the bank’s authorised capital would be Tk1,000crore while paid-up capital Tk200 crore. The cooperative societies’ total fund of Tk1,342crore will be transferred to the new bank.

PalliSanchay Bank will not be governed under the Banking Companies Act 1991, meaning it would remain mostly out of control of the central bank. But like Grameen Bank, it will have to submit reports as per Bangladesh Bank’s demands, and its audited reports will be presented via gazette notification and placed in the parliament.

The bank’s board of directors will consist of 15 members and the secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperatives Division will be its ex-officio chairman. ●

## Debt servicing becomes expensive

Kayes Sohail

The interest payment on government borrowing grew by 30% in the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the same period previous fiscal year, prompting the authorities to go for a mid-term debt strategy.

Officials are expecting the strategy to significantly ease the rising payments on debt servicing that soared well above the usual level of 18% annually.

“The government is considering steps to rationalise domestic borrowings and minimise the interest payments,” said a member of debt management committee of the finance ministry.

“We’ve already prepared a medium-term strategy and it will be sent to the ministry for approval soon.”

A move has already been taken to mobilise funds through issuing medium term bills and bonds in accordance with the strategy, said the official.

Domestic sources of borrowings – particularly the banking system – usually increase the cost of borrowing, leading to a rise in the payment of interest, analysts said.

The spending would exceed the government’s target in the current fiscal year 2013-14 unless the rising trend is addressed. It might force the government to borrow from the commercial banks to meet the budget deficit, they said.

In the current budget, the govern-

ment’s target for domestic interest payment on debt is Tk26,000 crore.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the interest payment was rising mainly due to the government’s increased borrowings from domestic sources.

“Domestic borrowings involve at least double-digit interest rates while foreign financing costs single-digit interest rates. The interest payment on foreign financing grew negatively by

over 4%.”

According to the finance ministry, the government paid only Tk590 crore in July-October period of the current fiscal year against Tk615 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal in interest on foreign financing.

Mansur said the government needed to focus on the external financing as any increased borrowing from the local banking sector might cause a crowding-out effect on the economy.

According to the finance ministry,

the government’s expenditure on interest payment on debt in the FY2012-13 stood at Tk24,000 crore, nearly 18% up from the previous fiscal.

Of the amount, Tk22,500 crore was paid in interest on domestic borrowings and Tk1,492 crore on foreign financing.

In first half of this fiscal, the government made a net repayment to Tk6,700 crore while borrowing Tk11,300 crore from scheduled banks, according to Bangladesh Bank. ●



# Stocks edge lower as profit booking continues

## Tribune Report

Stocks edged lower for the second straight session yesterday as investors continued to book profits.

The market was in the positive territory till mid-session but late profit booking mainly on tannery, telecommunications and power chipped away early gains.

After climbing more than 25 points, the benchmark DSEX lost 25 points or 0.6% to end at 4,798.

The Shariah based DSEX index edged over 7 points or 0.8% lower to 995. The blue chip comprising index DS30 shed 7 points or 0.5% to 1,691.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange Selective Category Index, CSCX, was down 44 points to 9,432.

The total turnover at DSE stood at Tk600 crore, which was more than 13% lower over the previous session.

“Market ended lower for the second trading session, weighed down by the hastening seller on heavy-weighted stocks,” said Lanka Bangla Securities in its market analysis.

It said some fundamental stocks were in the buying spree as price correction expedited some oppor-

tunistic buyers.

All the major sectors ended into red with tannery sector losing highest more than 2% in its market capitalisation.

It was followed by telecommunications, fuel and power, engineering and textile.

The financial sectors - banks and non-banking financial institutions - lost the least.

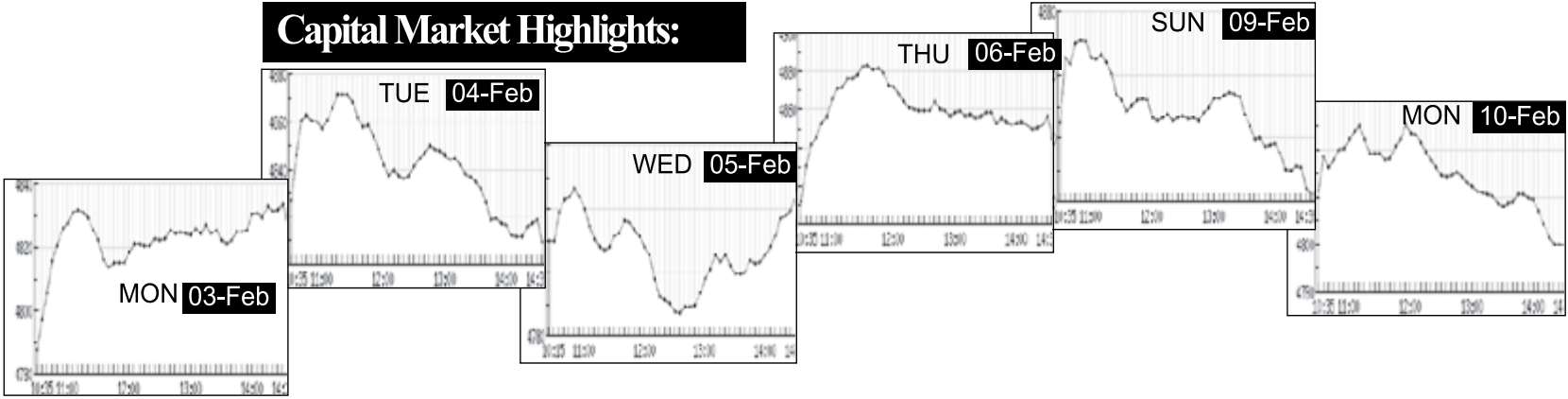
Zenith Investment said market observed further correction, as investors were still busy taking profits from their trades.

“Unlike last trading day, all the indices took the same route and went down to negativity.

Although, market correction is always inevitable, however, small corrections are not fatal but rather necessary for investors to become cautious and trade wisely.”

Square Pharmaceuticals, the country’s top pharmaceutical company, continued to become the top turnover leader for the second consecutive session with shares worth almost Tk35crore changing hands, followed by Meghna Petroleum, Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company, Olympic Industries, Jamuna Oil, Grameenphone, Lanka Bangla Finance and Southeast Bank. ●

DSE key features February 10, 2014	
Turnover (Million Taka)	6,034.89
Turnover (Volume)	111,725,375
Number of Contract	121,900
Traded Issues	291
Issue Gain (Avg. Price Basis)	69
Issue Loss (Avg. Price Basis)	216
Unchanged Issue (Avg. Price Basis)	6
Market Capital Equity (Billion Tk.)	2,298.63
Market Capital Equity (Billion US\$)	27.86



CSE key features February 10, 2014	
Turnover (Million Taka)	543.08
Turnover (Volume)	12,350,539
Number of Contract	18,436
Traded Issues	228
Issue Gain (Avg. Price Basis)	65
Issue Loss (Avg. Price Basis)	160
Unchanged Issue (Avg. Price Basis)	2
Market Capital Equity (Billion Tk.)	2,174.55
Market Capital Equity (Billion US\$)	26.36

DSE GAINERS									
Company	Closing (% change)	Average (% change)	Closing average	Closing	Daily high	Daily low	Turnover in million	Latest EPS	Latest PE
Standard Ceramic -A	6.47	6.18	39.50	39.50	39.50	39.50	0.020	1.06	37.3
Meghna Con. Milk -B	5.77	4.56	11.01	11.00	11.40	10.60	0.534	-4.58	-ve
GlaxoSK (BD) -A	5.66	3.35	1,149.43	1,170.10	1,176.60	1,115.00	20.230	46.69	24.6
Bangladesh Lamps -A	4.37	4.26	147.10	148.10	151.60	141.90	12.364	-0.77	-ve
7th ICB M F-A	4.31	4.31	92.00	92.00	92.00	92.00	0.092	13.84	6.6
Sun Life Insurance-N	3.98	3.06	78.74	78.40	80.80	68.00	56.154	0.00	-
PrimeFin. 1st MF-A	3.88	2.65	23.99	24.10	24.40	23.10	23.856	1.00	24.0
Central Pharm-A	3.66	2.18	47.71	48.10	48.40	42.10	51.918	1.74	27.4
Padma Islami Life*-N	3.62	2.81	96.14	97.30	101.00	85.00	95.262	1.10	87.4
Southeast Bank-A	3.60	1.69	22.80	23.00	23.20	20.00	144.420	2.24	10.2

CSE GAINERS									
Company	Closing (% change)	Average (% change)	Closing average	Closing	Daily high	Daily low	Turnover in million	Latest EPS	Latest PE
ACI Formulations-A	4.99	5.63	89.57	88.40	91.80	86.90	4.779	2.13	42.1
Delta Brac HFCL-A	4.62	4.49	70.52	70.20	71.50	69.00	0.705	3.46	20.4
MutualTrust Bank-A	4.44	4.44	18.80	18.80	18.80	18.80	0.009	-0.52	-ve
Prime Insur -A	4.21	4.21	39.60	39.60	39.80	39.40	0.040	2.36	16.8
Sun Life Insurance-N	3.71	3.75	78.64	78.30	81.00	75.50	3.588	0.00	-
Padma Islami Life*-N	3.45	4.68	96.54	95.90	99.90	100.00	2.630	1.10	87.8
PrimeFin. 1st MF-A	3.43	2.18	23.87	24.10	24.10	23.40	0.728	1.00	23.9
LankaBangla Fin. -A	3.38	1.85	73.88	73.50	76.20	70.50	18.243	2.75	26.9
IBBLMPB-A	3.34	3.35	1006.00	1006.00	1006.00	1006.00	0.025	0.00	-
MeghnaCement -A	3.32	2.21	158.61	158.60	159.00	155.00	0.428	6.29	25.2

# News from trade server

## Credit Rating of SAPORTL:

Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh Limited (CRAB) has informed that the entity rating of Summit Alliance Port Ltd. as "A1" on 10 February 2014 based on unaudited financial statements up to 30 September 2013, Audited financial statements up to 31 December 2012; bank liability position as on 10 December 2013 and other relevant quantitative as well as qualitative information up to the date of rating declaration.

## IPO Shares Credited of AFC Agro Biotech Ltd.:

All concerned are hereby informed that the IPO shares of the Company have been credited through CDBL to the respective BO A/Cs on 9 February 2014 except 2 BO Accounts which were found closed in the system.

## RIGHT SHARE:

ARAMITCEM: Subscription 23.03.2014 to 17.04.2014. Record date for entitlement of rights share: 09.01.2014.  
RUPALILIFE- Subscription 06.04.2014 to 05.05.2014. Record date for entitlement of rights share: 16.01.2014.  
BRACBANK: Subscription 20.04.2014 to 15.05.2014. Record date for entitlement of rights share: 10.02.2014.  
GENNEXT: Subscription 18.03.2014 to 09.04.2014, Record date: 25.02.2014.

## IPO Subscription:

Matin Spinning Mills Limited subscription date 26-30 January 2014, NRB upto 08 Feburay 2014. @ Tk. 37/-, face value taka 10 and market lot 200. Hwa Well Textiles (BD) Limited subscription date 17-23 February 2014, NRB upto 04 March 2014. At per, face value taka 10 and market lot 500.

## Dividend/AGM

GREENDELT: 15% cash and 15% stock, AGM: 15.03.2014, RD: 17.02.2014.  
RAKCERAMIC: 15% cash and 10% stock, AGM: 02.04.2014, RD: 13.02.2014.  
SALAMCRST: 13% cash, AGM: 29.03.2014, RD: 11.02.2014.  
ISTPRIMFMF: 10% cash, RD: 11.02.2014.  
HRTX: 15% cash, AGM: 21.04.2014, Record date: 20.02.2014.  
MAKSONSPIN: 5% stock, AGM: 13.03.2014, Record date: 16.02.2014.  
GSPFINANCE: 12% stock, AGM: 20.02.2014, RD: 03.02.2014.  
ECABLES: 10% cash, AGM: 01.03.2014, RD: 29.12.2013.  
USMANIAGL: 11% Cash & 10% Stock, AGM: postponed, RD: 07.11.2013.  
SAVAREFR: No dividend, AGM: 30.01.2014, RD: 19.12.2013.  
PADMAOIL: 90% Cash, 10% Stock,

Daily capital market highlights			
DSE Broad Index :	4797.97117	(-) 0.51%	▼
DSE Shariah Index :	995.72932	(-) 0.72%	▼
DSE - 30 Index :	1691.04906	(-) 0.45%	▼
CSE All Share Index:	14880.6095	(-) 0.49%	▼
CSE - 30 Index :	12575.5651	(-) 0.48%	▼
CSE Selected Index :	9432.5509	(-) 0.47%	▼

DSE LOSERS									
Company	Closing (% change)	Average (% change)	Closing average	Closing	Daily high	Daily low	Turnover in million	Latest EPS	Latest PE
Stylecraft -A	-5.96	-5.96	1020.00	1020.00	1020.00	1020.00	0.102	47.83	21.3
Bata Shoe Ltd. -A	-4.84	-2.77	847.98	833.00	878.90	830.00	9.243	52.75	16.1
Ambee Pharma -A	-4.55	-2.38	299.13	293.60	312.80	292.30	4.487	5.01	59.7
Northern G Insur-A	-4.47	-4.26	49.19	49.10	52.00	46.30	8.006	3.04	16.2
JMI Syringes MDL-A	-4.16	0.00	223.16	216.80	233.00	215.60	35.148	1.97	113.3
Prime Insur -A	-4.12	-3.29	35.52	34.90	36.30	34.10	4.290	2.36	15.1
Saiham Tex.A	-3.88	-3.08	32.69	32.20	33.30	32.00	19.337	3.04	10.8
Desh Garments -B	-3.71	-2.18	79.35	77.90	83.00	77.10	5.642	1.18	67.2
SummitAlliancePort.-A	-3.64	-2.47	32.41	31.80	34.20	31.00	10.525	0.91	35.6
Rahim Textile -A	-3.48	-2.92	320.23	316.30	338.00	305.00	3.579	11.56	27.7

CSE LOSERS									
Company	Closing (% change)	Average (% change)	Closing average	Closing	Daily high	Daily low	Turnover in million	Latest EPS	Latest PE
Samata Leather -Z	-9.43	-9.51	23.98	24.00	24.00	23.90	0.144	-0.04	-ve
EXIM Bank 1 MF-A	-7.69	-1.32	7.50	7.20	7.80	7.20	0.008	0.70	10.7
Mercantile Insur -A	-7.34	-5.63	26.98	26.50	28.90	26.20	0.135	1.49	18.1
Provati Insur.-A	-4.63	-2.87	31.09	30.90	32.00	30.60	0.224	2.24	13.9
Samorita Hospital -A	-4.59	-2.77	91.50	91.50	91.50	91.50	0.092	2.74	33.4
Pioneer Insur -A	-4.49	-6.54	74.50	74.50	74.50	74.50	0.037	5.75	13.0
Peoples Insur -A	-4.47	-2.50	37.02	36.30	37.50	36.30	0.118	2.20	16.8
AB Bank 1st Mutual Fund-A	-3.75	-3.63	7.70	7.70	7.70	7.70	0.015	0.52	14.8
Envoy Textiles Ltd-N	-3.63	-3.39	48.23	47.80	49.10	47.50	2.641	1.12	43.1
SummitAlliancePort.-A	-3.31	-2.19	32.58	32.10	33.00	32.00	2.139	0.91	35.8

## ANALYST

Market ended lower for the second trading session, weighed down by the hastening seller on heavy-weighted stocks

SECTORAL TURNOVER SUMMARY						
Sector	DSE		CSE		Total	
	Million Taka	% change	Million Taka	% change	Million Taka	% change
Bank	633.36	10.49	77.25	14.21	710.61	10.80
NBFI	425.98	7.06	35.96	6.62	461.94	7.02
Investment	139.69	2.31	6.43	1.18	146.12	2.22
Engineering	560.88	9.29	104.33	19.19	665.21	10.11
Food & Allied	327.53	5.43	16.50	3.04	344.04	5.23
Fuel & Power	893.14	14.80	38.93	7.16	932.06	14.17
Jute	1.52	0.03	0.00	0.00	1.52	0.02
Textile	474.16	7.86	40.96	7.54	515.12	7.83
Pharma & Chemical	902.85	14.96	62.14	11.43	964.99	14.67
Paper & Packaging	0.81	0.01	0.27	0.05	1.08	0.02
Service	40.66	0.67	4.06	0.75	44.72	0.68
Leather	72.14	1.20	2.50	0.46	74.64	1.13
Ceramic	62.80	1.04	14.39	2.65	77.19	1.17
Cement	315.33	5.23	10.34	1.90	325.67	4.95
Information Technology	92.19	1.53	18.73	3.45	110.92	1.69
General Insurance	124.32	2.06	7.73	1.42	132.05	2.01
Life Insurance	366.93	6.08	21.18	3.90	388.11	5.90
Telecom	353.92	5.86	40.68	7.48	394.61	6.00
Travel & Leisure	139.53	2.31	22.12	4.07	161.65	2.46
Miscellaneous	106.02	1.76	19.04	3.50	125.06	1.90
Debtenture	1.12	0.02	0.03	0.01	1.15	0.02

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CSE TURNOVER LEADERS									
Company	Volume shares	Value in million	% of total turnover	Daily closing	Price change	Daily opening	Daily high	Daily low	Daily average
Eastern Cables-Z	400,500	40.05	7.38	105.00	1.94	103.00	105.00	105.00	100.01
BD Submarine Cable-A	145,378	28.99	5.34	196.20	-2.44	201.10	207.00	192.00	199.38
Square Pharma -A	87,752	23.00	4.24	257.70	-0.92	260.10	268.90	256.70	262.07
Aftab Auto.-A	227,214	22.18	4.09	96.20	0.10	96.10	99.70	95.60	97.62
LankaBangla Fin. -A	246,935	18.24	3.36	73.50	3.38	71.10	76.20	70.50	73.88
aamra technologies-A	377,340	15.76	2.90	41.10	-1.44	41.70	42.50	40.70	41.76
UCBL -A	476,285	13.90	2.56	29.10	0.00	29.10	29.70	28.80	29.18
RAK Ceramics-A	206,138	12.76	2.35	61.40	-1.13	62.10	62.50	61.00	61.88
Apollo Ispat CL -N	376,000	12.13	2.23	32.10	-1.53	32.60	32.70	32.00	32.25
Grameenphone-A	56,400	11.70	2.15	206.40	-0.63	207.70	208.70	205.50	207.40
UNITED AIR-A	711,053	11.42	2.10	16.00	-0.62	16.10	16.20	16.00	16.06
Delta Life Insu. -A	42,050	11.35	2.09	265.80	0.64	264.10	274.00	265.00	269.96
Unique Hotel RL -A	117,145	10.70	1.97	90.30	1.35	89.10	92.20	89.10	91.37
BEXIMCO Ltd. -A	293,492	10.19	1.88	34.50	-1.99	35.20	35.20	34.40	34.74
Southeast Bank-A	442,236	10.04	1.85	23.10	4.05	22.20	23.20	21.80	22.70
BD Building Systems -A	126,525	9.13	1.68	71.20	-2.60	73.10	73.30	70.80	72.15
Padma Oil Co. -A	26,700	9.12	1.68	336.00	-0.41	337.40	345.00	334.50	341.39



# AFC Agro debuts at stock market today

**Tribune Report**

Share trading of AFC Agro Biotech begins today at the stock exchanges.

The IPO has been oversubscribed by more than 60 times on offer, indicating strong investor interest.

Investors ordered shares worth over Tk700 crore against offer of Tk12 crore, according to the company officials. The bio-pharmaceutical and biochemical manufacturer has issued 1.2 crore ordinary shares of Tk10 each under the fixed price method.

Of the total IPO, 10% was kept for non-resident Bangladeshis, 10% for mutual funds, 20% for the affected investors and 60% for resident Bangladeshis.

The raised fund will be used for pur-

chasing new machines and meeting IPO expenses. Its subscription started from December 8, and ended on December 12 for general investors and December 21 for non-resident Bangladeshis.

As per the company's half-yearly financial statement for the year ended on June 30, 2013 the earning per share (EPS) and net asset value (NAV) per share are Tk1.01 and Tk11.10 respectively.

Imperial Capital and Sigma Capital Management act as the issue managers of the company that produces agro-based pharmaceutical fermentation products. Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission gave the green light to AFC Agro Biotech on October 8. ●

# Toyota to stop making cars in Australia from 2017

**Reuters**

Toyota Motor Corp said yesterday it would stop making cars and engines in Australia by the end of 2017, marking the end of an era for a once-vibrant auto production base and the loss of thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

Toyota's decision follows the planned exits of General Motors and Ford Motor announced last year and would leave no global automaker remaining in Australia as high costs and a strong currency make it an unattractive production base.

"We did everything that we could to transform our business, but the reality is that there are too many factors beyond our control that make it unable to build cars in Australia," Toyota Australia President Max Yasuda said in a statement.

About 2,500 jobs will be affected when the plant stops building cars in 2017, the company said.

Toyota's exit from Australia after more than half a century there is a setback to Prime Minister Tony Abbott's



said Australia Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Secretary David Oliver.

"They've (the government) done absolutely nothing to keep Toyota in this country," he added, warning that A\$21 billion (\$18.80 billion) would be wiped from the economy and that some regions would go into recession.

The ACTU groups the main Australian trade unions under an umbrella group.

**Blow to manufacturing**

A pullout by Toyota had been widely feared because of the blow to the parts supply base from the flight of GM and Ford.

"It's a huge moment for industry in Australia," Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane told reporters in Canberra after Toyota's announcement.

"Toyota have made no requests to us other than express their frustration with the difficulty they were having with the industrial relations process," he said, when asked whether Toyota had sought financial assistance or other forms of aid.

Australia's car industry includes about 150 companies working in sectors from components to tooling, design and engineering, with more than 45,000 people employed directly in the car and parts-making sectors, according to government data.

While Australians bought a record 1.14 vehicles last year, according to the Australian Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, the proportion made domestically was a record low at barely 10%. Toyota was the top-selling brand, holding nearly one-fifth of the market.

Vehicle production in Australia has nearly halved in the past decade to just above 200,000 in 2012 from more than 400,000 in 2004. Sales of locally made vehicles have suffered in recent years as a stronger Australian dollar makes imported cars more competitive.

In contrast, global automakers have been building new factories and ramping up capacity in countries like Indonesia, where a burgeoning middle class and lower costs make it an increasingly attractive production base. ●

# Dollar mixed in Asia after US jobs report

**AFP, Tokyo**

The dollar inched up in Asia yesterday after a disappointing US jobs report fuelled questions about the pace of the Federal Reserve's stimulus taper.

The greenback rose slightly to 102.34 yen in afternoon Tokyo trade, from 102.30 yen in New York Friday. The euro weakened to \$1.3624 and 139.48 yen, from \$1.3637 and 139.52 yen.

Data Friday showed the US economy added 113,000 jobs last month, well below expectations of 175,000 although the unemployment rate slipped to 6.6% from 6.7%. The weaker-than-expected figures sparked concerns of a slump in the economy, coming after dismal numbers in December, and raised speculation that the Fed could take its foot off the pedal in winding down its bond-buying scheme.

"The headline change in employment was weaker than expected, but the unemployment rate fell," National Australia Bank said. "US employment tends to be a large market moving event, but the confusing set of numbers being released more recently, and the Fed's insistent tapering mantra, lessened the impact of the January data." ●

# Boeing sees Asia-Pacific fleet nearly tripling over 20 years

**Reuters**

Boeing maintained its 20-year forecast for airplane demand at \$4.8tn, and predicted that nearly half of the world's air traffic growth would be driven by travel to, from or within the Asia-Pacific over the next two decades.

Boeing estimated airlines in the Asia Pacific region would need an additional 12,820 jets valued at \$1.9tn over the next 20 years. It said the fleet would rise to 14,750 in 2032, from 5,090 in 2012.

"Asia Pacific economies and passenger traffic continue to exhibit strong growth," Randy Tinseth, vice president of marketing at Boeing Commercial Airplanes told a media briefing on Monday ahead of the Singapore Airshow.

"Over the next 20 years, nearly half of the world's air traffic growth will be driven by travel to, from or within the region. The Asia Pacific fleet will nearly triple, from 5,090 airplanes in 2012 to 14,750 airplanes in 2032, to support the increased demand."

Both Airbus and Boeing have committed to record production rates for their most popular models, but executives are closely watching the financial turmoil in key aviation markets such as Indonesia and Thailand.

Asia Pacific is home to some of the world's biggest long-haul carriers and budget carriers AirAsia and Lion Air have placed aircraft orders valued at billions of dollars and are among the biggest customers of Boeing and Airbus.

Boeing's data projects that passenger airlines in the region will rely primarily on single-aisle airplanes such as the Next-Generation 737 and the 737



A 787 Dreamliner being built for India Air is pictured at South Carolina Boeing final assembly building in North Charleston REUTERS

Max, a new engine-variant of the 737, to connect passengers. Single-aisle airplanes will represent 69% of the new airplanes in the region.

"New low-cost carriers and demand

for intra-Asia travel have fueled the substantial increase in single-aisle airplanes," Tinseth said.

After a record \$200bn of deals at last November's Dubai Airshow, few expect

# IMF hints Pakistan on track for \$550m loan tranche

**AFP, Dubai**

Pakistan was on track to receive a third loan tranche worth \$550m from the International Monetary Fund this year, the Washington-based lender indicated Sunday, saying the nation's economic recovery was gathering pace.

The IMF approved a \$6.7bn bailout loan package for Pakistan in September last year to help the struggling nuclear-armed country achieve economic reforms, particularly in its troubled energy sector.

"The IMF... is encouraged by the overall progress made in pushing ahead with policies to strengthen macroeconomic stability and reviving economic growth," IMF's Jeffrey Franks said after talks with Pakistan Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in Dubai.

The IMF said Pakistan's economy was picking up, with growth expected to reach about 3.1% in 2013/14 compared to its earlier estimate of 2.8%.

Cash-strapped Pakistan, plagued by a bloody homegrown Taliban insurgency, is battling to get its shaky economy back on track and solve a chronic energy crisis that cripples industry.

The IMF made an initial payment of \$540m, and in November fund officials said during a monitoring visit that Pakistan was "broadly on track" with reforms.

In December, Pakistan received \$554m as a second tranche of the loan.

Franks said IMF's executive board would tentatively in late March consider whether Pakistan was qualified to receive the third tranche. ●

# Airtel 3G reaches Khulna

**Tribune Business Desk**

Airtel Bangladesh Limited has recently announced its commercial 3G service launch in Khulna. After Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna is the fourth division to have come under 3G coverage blanket of Airtel. ●



Lotto, an Italian brand has recently opened its new outlet at Rajanigandha Market in Chandpur. MD Amir Zafor, police super of Chadpur district and The company's managing director, Kazi Jamil Islam inaugurated the outlet



Miss Madsurapochana Ittarong, ambassador of Thailand in Bangladesh recently opened Sawadee, an authentic Thai restaurant as the first phase of pre-launching a 4-star standard boutique hotel named Grand Oriental at Gulshan-1 in Dhaka



Bank Asia arranged a three-week long foundation training programme for its 35 officers in an effort to improve their professional efficiency. Aminul Islam, the bank's president and current managing director Jinaugurated the programme as chief guest at the Bank's Training and Development Centre in Dhaka on Sunday



NRB Global Bank Limited signed an agreement with IT Consultants Limited on Sunday. Under the agreement, NRB Global Bank will be able to connect with over 4500 ATM, 8000+ POS access, e-commerce and mobile banking facility across the country as a member of Q-Cash consortium. Md Abdul Quddus managing director, NRB Global Bank and Kazi Saifuddin Munir, PhD, managing director and CEO of IT Consultants signed the agreement on behalf of their organisations

# Oil prices down in Asian

**AFP, Singapore**

Oil prices eased in Asia yesterday following weak US jobs data but losses were curbed as fears of another severe North American winter storm boosted the demand outlook for heating fuel, analysts said.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for March delivery, eased 10 cents to \$99.78 in afternoon trade and Brent North Sea crude for March was down 38 cents to \$109.19.

The US economy added only 113,000 jobs in January, after a paltry 75,000 in December, according to the US Labour Department's survey of business establishments. Analysts had expected 175,000.

But a separate household survey showed the unemployment rate dropped for the third consecutive month, to 6.6% from 6.7% in December.

The labour force participation rate improved, though still at a historically low level, to 63%.

"Looking at the jobs data and how the equity and bond markets have responded ... some of the investors were

actually focused on the bright spots like the higher participation rate," Desmond Chua, market analyst at CMC markets in Singapore, told AFP.

News that another winter storm was poised to hit the United States also gave support to WTI prices, helping it breach the psychological \$100 level earlier in the day.

Last week, a state of emergency was declared in New Jersey and New York, where dwindling reserves of salt - used to melt snow and road ice - was a problem.

"The possibility of another winter storm has stoked the demand (for heating oil) over the weekend," Chua told AFP.

He said that the jobs data renewed optimism that the Federal Reserve might slow down the timetable for winding down its economic stimulus programme.

All eyes will be on Janet Yellen's first official appearance as Federal Reserve boss in the US Congress on Tuesday.

"Investors will watch for her take on the economy, and whether tapering is sustainable at the current pace of job creation," Chua said. ●





# Here comes the euro zone growth data

**Reuters**

The euro zone and its constituent parts will report fourth quarter economic growth numbers at the end of the week, offering policy makers at the European Central Bank a needed snapshot of the bloc's underlying strength.

Recent evidence has been mixed. There has been general improvement but a growing disparity between Germany and France, the currency union's largest economies.

Reuters polls suggest euro zone GDP will come in at 0.2% quarter on quarter for a year-on-year increase of just 0.4%. Germany's projected 0.3% quarterly rise, however, would translate to a relatively strong 1.3% for the year.

"The euro zone's economic outlook is slowly improving with even the likes of Greece showing signs that the worst is over," Northern Trust wrote in a note. "However, Europe's economic fundamentals are fragile, with deep divisions in performance among nations."

The ECB sat on its hands last week but gave a fairly clear steer that action could be taken next month if new internal forecasts show a further deterioration in inflation - falling so low as to trigger some concerns about deflation - and growth.

Bank President Mario Draghi pointedly flagged the Q4 gross domestic product data as crucial to the bank's thinking.

But what to do? A small interest rate cut from 0.25% to somewhere just above zero is hardly going to be a game changer and the ECB has already said it won't prime banks with long-term cheap money again unless they commit to lend into the real economy.

Bank stress tests looming to check on the stability of the financial system. Those same banks are also being told to deleverage and build up capital.

So while a case can be made for

more cheap long-term loans, or LTROs, if banks do commit to pass the money on to businesses, it would not be straightforward for them.

The ECB has discussed ceasing to soak up money it spent buying sovereign bonds during the euro zone's debt crisis. Ending such "sterilisation" would inject about 175bn euros of liquidity into the financial system. That would ease strains in euro zone money markets but probably do little to boost inflation, which the central bank wants.

That leaves printing money, or "quantitative easing", one of the ECB's last unbroken taboos. It is a long way off if it comes at all. But as Japan has shown, it's one of the few levers that could get prices rising again.

Another big set piece during the week is the Bank of England's quarterly inflation report.

All eyes will be on Governor Mark Carney and his ability to persuade markets and British people and companies that interest rates won't rise soon.

He is expected to give some indication about what path "forward guidance" - the expectations of what will happen - will take after the UK unemployment rate shot down to his trigger point for potential rate rises in months, rather than the years he expected it to take.

The Bank is likely to be less specific than before, and may introduce something like the US Federal Reserve's system of tracking the change views of individual policymakers. But an actual rate hike remains a long way off.

Italy, meanwhile, is braced for a credit rating review from Moody's on Friday. The agency has a Baa2 rating - two notches above junk - with a negative outlook so there could be some risk of a downgrade although recent data suggest the economy could have grown in the last quarter of 2013 for the first time since mid-2011.



The headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) are pictured in Frankfurt

REUTERS

**Emerging bets**

Any data or set-piece economic event during the week will fade in importance, however, if the rout in emerging markets continues.

Central banks in countries as diverse as Turkey, India, and Hungary have been struggling to contain huge investment outflows that have knocked their

currencies down.

The flip side is that developed markets are being threatened by imported disinflation from cheaper imports and their exporters risk becoming uncompetitive.

"Developments in global money and financial market conditions and related uncertainties, notably in the emerging market economies, may have

the potential to negatively affect (euro zone) economic conditions," the ECB's Draghi said last week.

The drive for much of the emerging currency flight has been concern about slowing growth in China and the US Fed's withdrawal of monetary stimulus based on an improving economy.

China reports import and export

## US set for trade enforcement action linked to India

**Reuters**

The US trade representative on Monday will announce a trade enforcement action tied to India, his office said, a move that could further rile relations after an incident last year involving the arrest and strip-search of an Indian consul.

US Trade Representative Michael Froman will discuss the action at a news conference at 2 pm (1900 GMT), his office said on Sunday night. The Office of the US Trade Representative said it could offer no additional details.

On Friday, the US Chamber of Commerce called on Washington to ratchet up pressure on India over intellectual property rights, a move that could help prevent Indian companies from producing cheap generic versions of medicines still under patent protection.

Also this week, the US International Trade Commission has a hearing scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday to look into Indian trade and investment practices.

In a submission to the USTR, the Chamber of Commerce asked that India be classified as a Priority Foreign Country, a tag given to the worst offenders when it comes to protecting intellectual property and one that could trigger trade sanctions.

Other trade groups, including those representing the pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries, echoed the call for a tougher stance on India.

India is on the US government's Priority Watch List for countries whose practices on protecting intellectual property Washington believes should be monitored closely.

The United States and India have been trying to get their relations back on track after New Delhi blamed Washington for a "mini crisis" over the treatment of its deputy consul general in New York in December.

The diplomat, Devyani Khobragade, was arrested and strip-searched after she was accused of visa fraud and underpaying her maid.

Her treatment provoked protests in India, which curbed privileges offered to U.S. diplomats in retaliation and asked Washington to withdraw a diplomat from New Delhi.

Khobragade left the United States in January after a complex deal in which her diplomatic status was switched to the United Nations, affording her a greater degree of immunity from prosecution. But US authorities have so far refused to drop the charges against her. ●

## Japan's current account woes throw spotlight on economic risks

**Reuters**

Japan posted its smallest current account surplus on record last year, throwing the spotlight back on Tokyo's ability to service its huge debt and exposing a danger point in an economy starting to find its feet after years of underperformance.

The world's third-biggest economy sped past many of its Group of seven counterparts in 2013 spurred by an aggressive mix of fiscal and monetary expansionary policies.

But a deteriorating external position has cast a shadow on the recovery as policy makers worry that the economy may falter if exports do not regain momentum.

"The government doesn't seem to be placing much emphasis on fiscal discipline," said Shuji Tonouchi, senior fixed income strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

"This makes the combination of rising debt and a weak current account balance an uncomfortable prospect."

The Ministry of Finance data on Monday also showed the current account balance for December slid to the largest deficit on record as exporters have failed to reap the benefits of a weak currency.

At the same time the energy import bill has risen sharply as Japan's nuclear power plants are idled following the Fukushima nuclear accident three years ago.



A "Don't Walk" traffic signal is seen in front of the national flag hoisted on the headquarters of Bank of Japan in Tokyo

REUTERS

cord 1,017tn yen last year, the finance ministry said on Monday. It cemented Japan's ranking as the most indebted country in the industrialised world.

In the past, many economists argued that high debts would not trigger a crisis, because Japan's ample current account surplus made it a net creditor to the world.

Now that the current account surplus is deteriorating, this could draw unwanted attention to the debt pile and on Japan's ability to service it.

Years of fiscal stimulus to revive a stagnant economy and surging social welfare costs for a rapidly ageing population have saddled Japan with the worst ratio of government debt to gross domestic product.

Increased welfare costs forced Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to go ahead with a scheduled two-stage sales tax hike from April this year, which is seen as a necessary first step in fixing Japan's tattered finances.

Analysts don't see an imminent threat of a debt crisis. Yields on Japanese government bonds are very low, with the JGB market still dominated by

Japanese savers and institutions rather than by fickle foreigners who would demand higher yields.

And the Bank of Japan continues to buy massive amounts of JGBs as part of its quantitative easing programme launched in April last year to beat deflation and spark 2% inflation in less than 2 years.

**Sluggish exports**

Many policy makers expected a falling yen would push up exports and support the economy but lacklustre external demand and declining competitiveness have hampered the trade sector.

The uneven recovery may prompt officials to consider other options to keep economic growth on track, some analysts say.

"Gains in exports are weaker than I expected, reflecting declining competitiveness," said Hiroaki Muto, senior economist at Sumitomo Mitsui Asset Management Co.

"The current account can remain in surplus, but the surplus will be small. This is an economic headwind that could place pressure on the govern-

ment and the BOJ to respond."

Last year imports rose 15.4% versus a 9% gain in exports, the MOF data showed.

In December, the current account deficit stood at a record 638.6 billion yen, against a median forecast for 707.7bn yen.

The yen has fallen around 23% versus the dollar since late 2012, spurred by the Abe government's stimulus policies.

Many in the government also expected the yen's fall to boost exports, but this has largely failed to materialise as Japanese companies are producing more goods outside of the country.

Moreover, Japanese companies have been losing market share to rivals from South Korea and other countries.

In the short run, the economy is likely to boom until at least March as consumers rush to beat the sales tax hike, and many analysts agree with the BOJ's view that the pain from the higher tax will be temporary.

However, weak exports could mean that the rebound is slower than some economists anticipate. ●

## Vietnam's hit game developer pulls plug on Flappy Bird

**AFP, Hanoi**

The Vietnamese developer behind the smash-hit free game Flappy Bird has pulled his creation from online stores after announcing that its runaway success had ruined his "simple life".

Technology experts say the addictive and notoriously difficult game rose from obscurity at its release last May to become one of the most downloaded free mobile games on Apple's App Store and Google's Play store. "Flappy Bird" is a success of mine. But it also ruins my simple life. So now I hate it," the game's creator Nguyen Ha Dong tweeted.

"I am sorry 'Flappy Bird' users, 22 hours from now, I will take 'Flappy Bird' down. I cannot take this anymore," he wrote Saturday from his @dongatory handle - which has seen its follower count grow by tens of thousands in the last few days.

Flappy Bird was not available on the US or UK Apple app stores on Monday.

"It is not anything related to legal issues. I just cannot keep it anymore," Dong tweeted.

Flappy Bird features 2D retro-style graphics. The aim of the game is to direct a flying bird between oncoming sets of pipes without touching them.

Dong has said in interviews that his brainchild was pulling in as much as \$50,000 per day in revenue from online advertising banners.

The free game has been the number one app in Apple's iOS App Store in more than 100 countries, according to An Minh Do, editor of the Tech in Asia online media company.

Withdrawing the game "may be a PR stunt or may be due to legal pressure or maybe he's sick of the press. That is not clear yet," Do told AFP.

Some Vietnamese online commentators have speculated that Dong took down the game after being pressured by Japan's Nintendo - Flappy Bird's simple graphics appear to owe some debt to Nintendo's early Mario brothers games.

But a Nintendo spokesman told AFP Monday: "Our company has not taken any action this time."

Local online newspaper VNEexpress quoted Dong - who also has two other games in the top 10 in online stores - as saying he created the game in a matter of days following "a weird design style".

After revealing the sizeable revenues Flappy Bird was bringing in, Dong has been subject to a torrent of criticism and abuse in Vietnamese online forums, leading some observers to speculate that it prompted his decision to withdraw the game. ●