

CPA delegates

FROM PAGE 1
brushed aside the speculations about rethinking the conference boycott, saying: "There is no scope for reviewing our decision. What we decided is final."

The AL decided not to join the conference in protest at what it said was the government's arrogant attitude toward the opposition in preparing for the event of the largest platform of lawmakers.

The CPA is yet to finalise the schedule of the inaugural session of the conference, as it still hopes the main opposition party would participate in the conference to be joined by 522 delegates from 154 parliaments in 48 countries. The highest number of delegates -- 174 from 34 parliaments -- will come from India.

The schedule will be finalised after CPA Secretary General Denis Marshall arrives in Dhaka on October 3. Marshall will visit Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and AL President Sheikh Hasina after his arrival.

Earlier in a letter, the CPA secretary-general invited Hasina to attend and speak at the conference on October 7 at the China-Bangladesh Friendship Conference Centre.

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, vice-president of the 49th CPA conference, yesterday once again urged the main opposition to take part in the event.

"I can't believe the AL will not participate. I still look forward to the

Defamation charge framed against Jugantar editor, publisher

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against the editor and the publisher of the daily Jugantar and the chairman of Jamuna Group in a defamation case.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas filed the case on November 10 last year.

The defendants are Golam Sarwar, editor of the newspaper, publisher Advocate Salma Islam and chairman of the group, Nurul Islam Babul.

Metropolitan Magistrate Khondaker Fatema Begum framed charges against the defendants in their presence.

The court fixed October 26 for trial of the case.

Mirza Abbas was also present in the court.

The complainant alleged that the Jugantar on November 6, 2002, published a news item headlined "A minister made an attempt to send Kala Farooq abroad and he (Farooq) died before disclosing the names of the godfather." The news cast aspersion on the character of the complainant, the plaintiff added.

The defendants pleaded not guilty and sought justice after the charges were read out by the court.

Nutrition project

FROM PAGE 12
for about three months, the officials said.

Moreover, the NGOs that participated in the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project (BINP) have refused to work on the project unless they got their outstanding bills settled.

Against this backdrop, the WB withdrew Tk 150 crore from the project funds in February this year.

"We made formal requests to the World Bank to clear all the APs at a time as agreed in the original deed document. But it has requested the NNP to form a special committee to re-evaluate the rest seven APs, further delaying the process," said Dr Anisul Awal, director of Programme Support and Technical Unit of the NNP.

A decision on formation of such a committee is awaiting approval of the health ministry, he added.

Awal also mentioned the most important task of the project, baseline survey on the NNP prior to its implementation, has not even started although it was supposed to be complete way back.

Sundararajan Srinivasa Gopalan, task leader of the NNP at the WB, said, "There are several reasons for the delay. In June 2002, reiterated its position on hiring of the NNP staff. In

Tullow

FROM PAGE 12
the owner of 30 per cent equity. Tullow sought clarification from the CIBL in this regard.

According to Article 12.2 of the JOA and Article 31.3, the CIBL needs prior written approval of the government, Petrobangla, Tullow, Texaco and Bapex. "Tullow has no inherent objection to Niko...but we are concerned to ensure that any proposed transferee satisfies all the requirements of the PSC and JOA before the transfer becomes effective," it said.

It also criticised the secretive way the CIBL sealed the deal. "Chevron-Texaco seeks to transfer their obligations to Niko without demonstrating to Tullow or Bapex how their interests are to be protected. This is unacceptable behaviour."

The partners should have been approached first when the CIBL wanted to sell its shares, argued Tullow.

participation of the opposition," he told journalists at his Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban chamber.

Asked about the approval of the Bangladesh delegation to the conference without consultations with the AL, the deputy speaker said, "It was approved in line with practice. The speaker communicated with the opposition before he approved the delegation."

The CPA executive committee will hold several meetings from October 4-6 in the build-up to the highlight of the conference to be inaugurated by the prime minister on October 7.

The conference themed "Partnerships for Global Peace and Prosperity" will focus on seven topics: Parliament and Executive; Building a More Effective Partnership; Do we Have Adequate Peacekeeping Mechanism for Preserving World Order; Are the Millennium Goals Achievable; Reconciling Human Rights with Cultural Diversity; How can the Doha Round Contribute to Increasing Trade and Investment Opportunities for Developing Nations and Antiterrorism Legislation; Have We Achieved any Tangible Result.

The final plenary will be held on Balancing Multilateral Support and National Sovereignty; Managing the Interface between the International Community and Local Interest.

Man, boy die in city road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man and a boy were killed in separate road accidents at Kalyanpur in Mohammadpur and in the city's outskirts Keraniganj yesterday.

An unidentified vehicle rammed an unidentified man aged about 40 on Mirpur Road at Kalyanpur when he was crossing the road at about 6:15am.

Mohammadpur police recovered the body lying on the road and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a 12-year-old boy, Lalon, was crushed by a speeding minibus when he was crossing the road near Shamsuh Filling Station at about 1:00pm.

Locals rushed Lalon to DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

Separate cases were lodged with the relevant police stations.

Salute indeed

FROM PAGE 1
tion of a report that he deemed libellous.

Abbas rushed to the court yesterday after the accused sought for dismissal of the case as the minister failed to appear before the court on five consecutive dates of hearing.

The court after hearing both sides framed charges against the accused.

September, a new leadership at the bank agreed to all the Ecnec decisions and finally the deadlock was over."

"This paved the way for the government to formally approve the NNP in December 2002 and so, the implementation of NNP actually began in January 2003."

But Health Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told The Daily Star, "The NNP has made no progress in the last three years and I am not satisfied with it at all. We have decided to integrate the NNP with the health, nutrition and population sector programme (HNPSF) we are expecting to launch shortly."

About the delay in approval, the minister said, "The row was over fixing wages of the NNP officials. We disagreed to have two different types of wages for officials working in the same project."

Women repression

FROM PAGE 12
with the Women's Directorate, police stations or courts finally proved false, exaggerated or motivated and many of those concerned petty family affairs.

Sources mentioned that Reshma 32, a mother of two and wife of a rickshawpuller of Rupatala area of the city, lodged a rape case against a former ward commissioner of Jhalakati municipality, Humzun Kabir. The complainant herself later confessed the case was intended to harass him. Her husband, who made her file the case, was arrested.

Mamta Begum, wife of a physician in Kashipur area of the city, filed a case last month accusing her two brothers-in-law of raping and attempting to murder her sister Laizu. This case also turned out to be a false one.

Besides, a large number of abduction cases of teenage girls proved as actual love affairs, the sources noted.

The report suggested distribution of booklets, leaflets, posters, arranging slide shows, cultural functions and dramas to raise public awareness about such misdeeds.

Advocate Mohsin Montu, special public prosecutor at the Special Tribunal for Prevention of Repression on Women and Children, Barisal, also admitted that a large number of cases under the relevant act are false.

RHD staff protest transfer of roads to LGED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) staff yesterday staged a protest at the Shaheed Minar demanding withdrawal of the government decision to place 9,000 km of RHD roads under the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED).

They claimed that the LGED lacks technical expertise and equipment for their maintenance.

They also said a section of the officials of the Physical Infrastructure Division (PID) of the planning ministry was behind this move.

According to a suggestion of the World Bank (WB), the PID initiated a study to classify the road network of the country a few years back.

After the study, the PID classified the roads into six categories -- national, regional, district, upazila, rural and union levels.

The national, regional and district roads have fallen under the RHD and the rest three under the LGED.

Officials of the RHD alleged that the PID did not properly conduct the study as no opinion was sought from technical experts.

"The LGED is supposed to maintain the roads that are linked to upazila from rural areas as lesser number of vehicles with low loads ply these," said a RHD engineer to The Daily Star.

"The RHD maintained the district-to-district and upazila-to-upazila roads as high load carrying vehicles ply these," he added.

"Considering the RHD's technical expertise and equipment, the government gave the responsibility of maintaining these bigger roads to the department," said the engineer.

Blair

FROM PAGE 12
to his region and to the wider world." Blair's government has been savaged in recent weeks by an official inquiry that has spotlighted the debate surrounding the prime minister's justification for attacking Iraq.

But Blair urged people to wait for the US arms report and he dismissed remarks by former UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix that Saddam had probably destroyed most of his weapons in 1991.

"Why on earth was he obstructing the (UN) inspectors all the way through the 1990s? Why did we have to go, as we did with America, to bomb Baghdad in 1998 when the inspectors were driven out?" Blair said.

A YouGov poll for The Sunday Times newspaper has put Labour on 30 percent -- three points behind the Conservatives and neck-and-neck with the Liberal Democrats, Britain's third main party.

For the first time, all three parties are tied on 31 percent, according to an ICM poll in the News of the World.

It is Labour's lowest rating since Neil Kinnock was leader of the party and Margaret Thatcher was prime minister of the Conservative government.

Worryingly for Blair, voter disillusionment is reflected among Labour party activists.

A YouGov poll of 301 party members for The Observer newspaper found that 41 percent want him to stand down before the next election.

ICM's poll found that 64 percent of voters no longer trust Blair and 48 percent want him to quit.

Half the British public believe Blair should resign, according to a Mori survey for the Financial Times published Saturday.

N'ganj phone

FROM PAGE 1
after the fire broke out and found the exchange locked.

The firefighters entered the exchange through a window of the main distribution frame (MDF) section.

They did not find any evidence of sabotage either in the MDF room or any other section.

The probe body concluded that high voltage of electricity was the most likely cause behind the fire.

Hills people

FROM PAGE 1
blockade made public life in the hills district screech to a halt.

The association enforced the blockade on September 26 to press for its 22-point demand including the continuation of ration. The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity and the United People's Democratic Front supported the association blockade.

Meanwhile, a UPDF leader, Pratyha Chakma, alleged in a statement that the government is trying to sweep the Mahalchhari incident under the carpet by not forming a judicial committee to probe it.

The UPDF has called for a one-day road blockade and office boycott in the Mahalchhari thana today.

Worst power cut

FROM PAGE 1
extravaganza of art events -- turned into a black night for millions.

RAI Uno television gave live coverage of the outage, showing images of Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican steeped in darkness.

A spokesman for the Italian national grid said it had lost control of the network in just four seconds, leading to a disastrous "domino effect" that cut off electricity nationwide.

It was still too early to give an exact explanation for the outage, he said, although early reports said the Italian grid suddenly lost 6,000 megawatts of power coming from France. A French official strongly denied responsibility for the blackout.

Power had been restored to northern Italy by around 8:00 am, including in the cities of Turin and Milan, two of the country's economic powerhouses, while lights flickered back on and elevators whirred back to life in Rome around midday.

In the capital citizens were advised to use power with moderation, while electricity to much of the south was still largely out. In 1994 18 million people in the south were left without power in the previously worst blackout in Italian history.

The head of the civil protection services, Guido Bertolaso, told RAI Uno following an emergency meeting that the situation was "under control", and that it was hoped the power supply could be fully restored by early afternoon.

"We immediately guaranteed power supply to essential infrastructures: hospitals, fire services

1 held on charge of Azizur abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An accused in the abduction case of former Khulna Homeopathic Medical College Principal Dr Azizur Rahman was arrested at GrameenPhone (GP) head office in Gulshan yesterday, 25 days after the abduction.

Police arrested Hashmat Ali, son of Azizul Huq of Bilbaush village in Kalia, Narail an employee of the GP at about 2:00pm, police said. He will be produced before the court today with remand prayer, police said.

However, police are yet to know whereabouts of Dr Rahman, also executive director of Al-Quran Research Academy (Bangladesh).

He went missing since September 4 when he came out of his Mazar Road residence in Mirpur with one Jubair to visit an ailing relative in Chittagong, family sources said.

Dr Rahman's wife Farhana Reza Jui filed an abduction case with Mirpur Police Station on September 23 accusing six including Hashmat Ali.

Dr Rahman financially supported Hashmat to continue his studies and appointed him manager at their family business, Hotel Kader, in Khulna a few years ago. But Hashmat was sacked for his ill motive to grab Rahman's property, Jui told The Daily Star yesterday.

"He started conspiring against us and joined hands with some persons of Khulna who were making profit from some 'so-called homeopathic colleges' and became hostile to Dr Rahman as he worked for closure of those colleges," Jui said.

Hashmat called Jui on her cell phone ten days ago asking her to repent for the past attitude and sent a letter to Hotel Kader on September 22 saying he knew Dr Rahman's abductors who had cut off his one finger.

Hazari

FROM PAGE 1
Yesterday's judgement came only on the fifth day of the trial after the charge of the case was framed on September 11 followed by two witnesses' hearings on September 23 and 24 and a final argument on September 25.

The case was sent to the Chittagong tribunal on September 2 and police pressed charge against Hazari on November 8, 2001 when the Court of the District and Sessions Judge, Feni was dealing with the case.

The case was lodged on August 17, 2001 following recovery of the ammunition.

The tribunal heard six of the eight prosecution witnesses during the trial. The prosecution witnesses who gave deposition include plaintiff Sub-inspector (SI) Bipul Barua, two investigation officers SI Ferdous Ahmed and SI Moshir Rahman, three Feni residents Md. Abul Kashem, Bakhtiar Hossain Munna and Nazir Ahmad.

Special Public Prosecutor Ahmed Qamrul Islam Chowdhury Sajjad pleaded for the state, while state-appointed lawyer Advocate Ahsanul Hoq Hena moved for the defendant.

and police. This is a serious problem -- fortunately it happened on a Sunday," he said.

Bertolaso also ruled out sabotage as the cause of the blackout.

People were also advised not to use their cars until traffic lights had been restored, nor to make unnecessary phone calls for fear of overloading the system.

Italian Industry Minister Antonio Marzano said the "exceptional incident" had been caused by an outage of two power lines carrying electricity from France to Italy.

"The truth is we are structurally dependent on electricity imports day and night," explained Carlo Bolino, the head of the Italian electricity network.

France's national grid confirmed early Sunday that two high tension powerlines supplying Italy were cut briefly early Sunday but denied responsibility for the subsequent blackout.

Transport workers

FROM PAGE 12
sacked in Metro Hall, Adamjee, Pathantuli, Godnail areas.

At one stage, the rival groups locked in an armed conflict and fired three bullets.

The district commissioner arranged a meeting between the two groups when police took control of the situation. The service of Eagle has been suspended at the meeting until the district bus transport association takes any decision in this regard.

5 get 44-yr RI for selling girl into prostitution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A court here sentenced five people to 44 years and another person to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a trafficking case yesterday.

Court sources said Rustam Ali, his wife Nurjahan Begum, Ramiz Uddin, his mother Fulmon Begum, and Nurjahan Begum, wife of MA Kader -- were sentenced to 44 years' RI for selling a young girl to a brothel in New Delhi.

Judge Abdul Quddus Mia of Barisal Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal (STT) also fined them Tk 10,000 each, in default, they will have to serve two more years of rigorous imprisonment. Rustam and Nurjahan are absconding and were sentenced in absentia.

The other convict Yusuf Ali Howlader, sentenced to 10 years' RI, was also fined Tk 5,000, in default, he is to serve an additional one-year jail sentence.

Nine other accused in the case were acquitted.

The victim's mother Hasina Begum of Indur Kani under Zianagar Police Station of Pirojpur district filed the case against the accused for smuggling her 19-year-old daughter into India on the pretext of finding her a high-paying job and selling her to a brothel in New Delhi's red-light district.

The incident happened on October 9, 2001, but Hasina Begum learned about her daughter's fate when the victim wrote to her on May 18, 2002.

Housewife

FROM PAGE 12
Hosneara was then taken to the operation theatre for abortion. After the operation, she was bleeding profusely and was shifted to Holy Crescent Clinic at Mirpur at around 12:00pm after the doctors failed to stop the bleeding.

Hosneara was finally sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as her condition deteriorated. But she was left unattended for more than half an hour at the emergency.

When taken to the gynaecology ward at 4:20am, the doctors pronounced her dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

The duty officer of Mirpur Police Station said last night that they arrested Mohammad Labu, owner of the clinic.

Flood

FROM PAGE 1
for the upazila headquarters and the Batiaghata Police Station as water swamped the buildings.

Batiaghata Sadar, Hetalbania, Kismat Phultala, Hatbati, Bashirabad, Maitbhanga and Balabanua are the worst hit areas where relief is yet to reach.

The situation turned alarming and starvation threatens to strike the affected villages, said Panchanan Biswas, local lawmaker.

The gushing water, if not checked urgently, may wipe out many villages, said Wapda Engineer Sharif Al Kamal.

FM attends CMAG meet in New York

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan attended the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) meeting in New York Friday.

The CMAG meet reviewed political situations in Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Fiji and Solomon Islands each of whose Commonwealth membership was suspended earlier, a foreign ministry press release said yesterday.

The foreign ministers agreed to discuss the matter when they meet in December in Abuja, Nigeria for the meeting of Commonwealth heads of government, it added.

Four killed as criminals attack village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Assailants yesterday killed four and injured several others at Kashempur village of Fatehpur union under Rajnagar upazila.

Police said a gang attacked the people of the village assembled in arbitration over a local dispute and opened gunfire, killing four on the spot.

The dead are Lulu Miah, 32, Faisal, 18, Farid, 18, and Ripon, 13.

Police probe Hizbut fund source

UNB, Dhaka

Police are now looking for the financial source of Bayezid Khan Panni, the main leader of Islamic militant outfit Hizbut Touhid.

"Motivated by some anti-Islamic and vested groups, he is trying to create a controversy, leading to a conflict and chaos-like situation," a police officer told the UNB on condition of anonymity.

The officer, who interrogated Panni for several hours, also said his followers use hammers to defend themselves.

"It is impossible to run a militant organisation like Hizbut Touhid without investing a huge amount of money," he said.

Police suspect the Hizb leader and his daughter Shahnaz Khan Panni of having links with some international fanatic and terror organisations.

Police will also talk to Shahnaz and his other family members as part of an investigation into activities of the militant group and its leader.

Panni, who has been under police remand at Fatulla Police Station in Narayanganj, has reportedly claimed of commanding some 200 devoted followers to propagate "his call about Islam". He said his followers were especially active in Madaripur, Gazipur, Barisal, Kushtia and Narayanganj.

UNDP

FROM PAGE 1
In the attack allegedly by Bangalee settlers, more than 2000 people were made homeless, nine women raped, two including an eight-month old baby killed and about 20 were injured.

JRC meet

FROM PAGE 1
Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed is leading the delegation to the two-day JRC meet.

The other delegates are Water Resources Secretary Saif Uddin, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Tofael Karim Haider, Director General of Bangladesh Water Development Board Muklesuzzaman and member of the Joint Rivers Commission Tahidul Anwar Khan.

The delegation is expected to return on Oct. 3.

Moon mission

FROM PAGE 12
ESA is spending a total of 330 million euros (389 million dollars) to fix the ECA's design flaw, carry out other modifications and conduct two test launches of it.

The latest mission, of critical importance for ESA, was the fourth this year for marketing company Arianespace and the 14th launch of a Generic Ariane 5 rocket.

SMART-1 is the first European satellite to use helio-electric or solar propulsion, combined with lunar gravity.

The probe will not land on the moon, 400,000 kilometres (250,000 miles) away.

From its lunar orbit it will carry out observations from December 2004, probably for six months or up to a year.

According to David Southwood, ESA director of scientific programs, the probe is the first in a series of Small Missions for Advanced Research in Technology, or SMART.

Education projects

FROM PAGE 1
textile, leather, glass and ceramic technology.

Quoting a recent report, she told the meeting that most of the 54 projects under the ministry could not move ahead because of lack of coordination and inefficient management.

Education Minister M Osman Farruk, State Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon and Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Alam attended the meeting.

Sources said the prime minister took them to task as the ministry failed to implement many projects in time and even could not utilise the funds of some others.

Tk 20 crore allocated for purchasing scientific equipment and books under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education long remained unutilised.