

Three ministers, two advisers now visiting foreign countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three cabinet members and two advisers are now visiting foreign countries for various reasons. Of them, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, parliamentary affairs adviser to the prime minister Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar have gone to Singapore for treatment, sources said. They left Dhaka on February 26. Advisor to the energy ministry Mahmudur Rahman is also now in Singapore and Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmad, who is now visiting China, will arrive in Singapore within a day or two, the sources added. Saifur Rahman is expected to return home on Sunday, SQ Chowdhury next week and Babar on March 6, the sources said. In the absence of Babar, LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has been in-charge of the home ministry.

Three DIGs promoted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three Deputy Inspector Generals (DIGs) of police were promoted to the rank of Additional Inspector General yesterday. They are SM Mizanur Rahman, Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Shamsul Islam, Additional Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) and Noor Mohammad, DIG of Khulna range. Home Ministry in an order yesterday gave Mizanur Rahman the charge of DMP commissioner, sources said. Earlier, he was on current charge. Shamsul Islam has been made director general of the DNC while Noor Mohammad transferred to the police headquarters immediately after their promotion.

14-party grand rally in Ctg today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina arrives here today to attend the Chittagong divisional grand rally of AL-led 14-party alliance. The grand rally will be held at the Outer Stadium at 2:00pm to press their 23-points demands including reforms in caretaker government systems and the Election Commission, adequate supply of power, water, diesel and fertiliser as well as check on price hike of essential commodities. Hasina, also the Leader of the Opposition in parliament, is scheduled to address at 3:00pm. Preparations are complete for holding the grand rally where some five lakh leaders, activists and supporters of 14-party alliance are expected to gather from eleven districts of Chittagong division. The 14-party alliance leaders in a press briefing called upon the supporters to make grand rally a success. Meanwhile, some 700 police force and 650 members of Rab will be deployed to maintain law and order in and around the rally venue. Police would be posted at 100 points on both sides of the routes leading to the rally venue. A five-member team lead by a sub-inspector would be posted at each point. The members of elite force will be patrolling the city in plain cloth. A dog squad of Rab also arrived in Chittagong to help maintain the security.

Death anniversary

Today is the third death anniversary of M A T I U R R a h m a n, former cabinet minister and president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries, says a press release. He was also chairman of Kisan Group. On the occasion, foods will be distributed at his birthplace at Parganj in Rangpur.
Md Shamsul Haque
Today is the first death anniversary of Md Shamsul Haque, former director (operation) of Ansar and Village Defence Party, says a press release. On this day in 2005, he died of a sudden heart attack while he was in duty at his workplace. On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his house at 77 C, Government Officers' Quarter, Azimpur in the city after Maghrib prayers today.

Take steps to bring about electoral reforms

Hasina urges govt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government must take an initiative to implement the opposition's proposals for reforms in the electoral system. The government should place a bill in parliament to bring reforms to the caretaker government and the Election Commission, she said at the concluding session of a golden jubilee conference of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the city. Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the opposition lawmakers have submitted notices

demanding discussions in parliament on 10 burning issues, including August 21 grenade attack, militancy and Kibria killing, but not a single notice has been accepted. Expressing grave concern over recurrence of building collapse, she said only National Building code is not enough to avert such disasters as codes and laws could not be implemented because of widespread corruption. The opposition leader said the government has utterly failed to generate one megawatt electricity during its four and half years' rule. As a result, the entire country is now experiencing acute power crisis in this peak boro season, she added. The alliance government is now resorting to election engineering to hang onto power sensing that people had lost confidence in them, Hasina said. She also called on all to resist such a move of the government at any cost and establish the people's right to vote. IEB President M Anwarul Azim, Chairman Riazul Islam Rizu and Honorary Secretary Md Quamruzzaman also spoke. Later, the opposition leader gave away prizes to the engineers for their outstanding contribution to their respective fields.



PHOTO: STAR

Police intercept a Jubo Mahila League procession carrying brooms and pitchers at Tejgaon in the city yesterday as the demonstrators were demanding adequate supply of water and electricity.

Matin receives Amader Shomoy Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin yesterday received The Dainik Amader Shomoy Sammanana-2006, an honorary award of a Bangla daily, for his significant role in the historic Language Movement in 1952. On the occasion, speakers urged the government to launch a Bangla language web site for spreading Bangla language throughout the world. Matin in his speech urged all political parties to take effective steps to save the Bangla language and protect the country from the grip of the militancy and fanatics. Eminent Barrister Aminul Islam, Dhaka University former vice chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Jatya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, former National University vice-chancellor Durga Das Bhattacharya, Awami League leader Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, Amader Shomoy Editor Naimul Islam Khan, Amader Shomoy Editorial Panel President Prof M A Hannan Firoj and Singer Fakir Alamgir were also present.

Apollo Hospitals opens one-stop stroke centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Apollo Hospitals Dhaka yesterday opened a stroke centre, first of its kind in the country, with a view to provide one-stop treatment to stroke patients round the clock. Khandaker Moniruddin, managing director of Apollo Hospitals, inaugurated the stroke centre in the afternoon in presence of Richard Larson, chief executive officer, Praful Pawar, director of medical services, and Dr Alim Akhtar Bhuiyan, chief co-ordinator of Apollo Stroke Centre. At a press conference at its auditorium, Apollo Hospitals officials said due to lack of a comprehensive stroke treatment centre, the mortality rate of the patient is high in the country. With this world-class centre, stroke patients will now get required treatment, said the managing director. Stroke is a brain disease, not heart disease. Diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, obesity and sedentary lifestyle are mainly responsible for growing number of stroke patients in the country, said Dr Alim. People after age 50 normally face the stroke disease, he added. About treatment cost, Dr Alim said bed charges per day vary from Tk 1,500 to Tk 15,000 depending on additional facilities and other medical check-up cost.

Keep factory gates open during working hours

BGMEA asks members
UNB, Dhaka
BGMEA at its meeting decided that each factory would have to construct two stairs and keep open during the working time. 'If BGMEA vigilance team found any gate of a factory closed, they would fine that factory Tk 10, 000 for the first time while Tk 50, 000 for second time, and cancel the membership for the third time,' says the decision. The BGMEA leadership gave 45 days for constructing two-way exits (stairs) for the factories for those who don't have that. After the deadline, the association will stop giving a delinquent unit any kind of service.

Chehlum

Chehlum of ANM Eusuf, former principal secretary to the prime minister and chairman of KEPZ Corporation, will be held at his residence at House 33, Road 10A, Dhanmondi, in the city after Asr prayers on Friday, says a press release. Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the chehlum and pray for salvation of the departed soul. He passed away in the early hours of yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY
A graphic with sun and cloud icons.

Dry weather likely

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Includes Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Jhenidah ASP, CID inspector of Dhaka held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna
Two police officers were arrested when they surrendered to the court of District and Sessions Judge in a bribery case here yesterday. Judge AKM Ishtiaque Hossain ordered the court police to arrest Abdur Razzak, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Jhenidah, and Mahatabuddin, CID Inspector of Dhaka, rejecting their petition for bail. Another accused Sub-Inspector Latif Munshi is on bail. The police officers were sent to Khulna District Jail immediately after their arrest.

Fish trader Khalilur Rahman, complainant of the case, filed a case on November 20 in 2004 with the court of District and Sessions Judge accusing the three police officers of receiving bribe from nine accused of a criminal case lodged on July 12, 2004 with Koira Police Station. Earlier, Khalil of Bagali village of Koira upazila of Khulna filed an FIR with Koira Police Station on July 12 in 2004 accusing 11 people of looting and making attempt on his life. SI Latif Munshi, investigating officer of the case, allegedly demanded Tk 3 lakh as bribe from the accused for exempting them from the charge sheet, court sources said. Later, Razzak, ASP of 'A' Circle and Mahabuddin, OC of Koira Police Station at that time, allegedly received Tk 1 lakh from nine out of 11 FIR-named accused, sources added. The IO submitted the charge sheet to the court on November 3 in 2004.

52 FIRST CLASS Body to probe DU result controversy

DU CORRESPONDENT
In the wake of recent controversies surrounding the masters' result of the political science department, the Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday formed a seven-member committee to investigate the incident. As many as 52 students of the department secured first class in the Master of Social Science examinations, 2002 (held in 2004) that gave rise to widespread controversy. The DU Syndicate formed the committee at a meeting, with Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair. The committee is headed by DU Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider. And the members are Prof Tazmeri SA Islam, Dhaka Medical College Principal Prof Dr Hosne Ara Tahmin, Prof Sadeka Halim, Dr Rafiqul Islam, Dr Md Rahmatullah and DU Examination Controller Md Abdul Latif. The committee has been asked to submit its report within next 10 working days. Some teachers of the department alleged that the question papers were leaked before the examinations and a group of students who had close relationship with the chairman of the examination committee got the questions.

ROBBERY AT CITY HOUSE Cash, valuables worth Tk 18.50 lakh looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Armed robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth Tk 18.50 lakh from the house of a car showroom owner at South Mugdapara in the city yesterday. A gang of five robbers entered the house of Nurul Islam Masud pressing doorbell at around 3:30pm. They made all members of the family hostage at gunpoint and looted Tk 1 lakh in cash, 120 tolas of gold ornaments and other valuables. Masud filed a case with Sabujbagh Police Station last night. Police have failed to arrest anyone or recover looted goods as of 12:10am today.

DHAKA TODAY Seminar
Fourth-year students of the Department of International Relations, DU, organises a seminar on 'Pollution and Waste Management: Tannery relocation to Saver' with Prof Amena Mohsin in the chair. Venue: Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities, Lecture Theatre, DU. Time: 10:30am.
Rally
Karmojibi Nari will hold a meeting and form a human chain demanding an end to fertiliser, diesel and electricity crises. Venue: Muktangan. Time: 11:00pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Children flip through books at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy in the city on the concluding day of the fair yesterday.

TAHER MURDER CASE Four Rajshahi city cops put under surveillance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi
More than four city police officials have been put under surveillance for distracting the investigation into Prof S Taher Ahmed murder case by helping Jamaat-Shibir leaders to create chaos through 'misleading information', said sources. The officials, allegedly biased to Jamaat-Shibir leaders, informed them beforehand of the involvement of Rajshahi University (RU) Shibir President Shalehi in the killing to help him go into hiding. They also provided Jamaat-Shibir leaders with a 'secondary story' of the killing based on 'imaginary information' to save Shalehi, it was alleged. Meanwhile, Jamaat-Shibir leaders have changed their strategy of chaotic movement, and are now pressurising BNP high-ups to remove police officials investigating the case and to act on the 'second story'. After February 26, they did not hold any programmes on the campus or in any city areas to speak for Shalehi, but they are lobbying with BNP high-ups. In recent meetings, Jamaat-Shibir leaders claimed that Taher was murdered when he discovered

an immoral affair of another teacher of his department at his house on his sudden return to Rajshahi on February 1. They also demanded immediate arrest of the said teacher and said police recovered a ring and clothing of a woman from near the body of Taher. But the investigators quoting confessional statements of the arrested killers refuted the Jamaat-Shibir claim. They said the seizure list does not show any ring and the clothing found around the neck of the body belonged to victim's daughter. 'We are now waiting for the arrest of Shalehi to complete investigation. We have no plan to change the investigation officer as demanded by Shibir, because the plaintiff of the case as well as RU authorities have no objection to the investigation', said a police source. 'Our investigation followed suspected killers' statements and collected evidences,' said Rajshahi Police Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed. 'None can change the findings of the investigation as all documents and evidences have been brought to knowledge of the court,' he added.



PHOTO: STAR

ETV Viewers' Forum forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding immediate steps to allow Ekushey Television to resume its transmission.

Govt blamed for failure to protect workers' interest

SKOP agitation begins March 2
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday blamed the government for its failure to protect the interests of workers at garment factories and other industries. Speaking at a press conference, the parishad leaders said they will launch a strong agitation against the government from next month as it did not implement an accord signed with the SKOP in January 2004. As part of the programme, SKOP will hoist black flag at the offices of its affiliated bodies, initiate mass contact with garment workers and take out procession from March 2 to 4. It will also hold a rally in front of BGMEA at 11.00am on March 5 and a grand rally at Muktangan at 11.00am on March 12 to press home their demands. The press conference was organised by the SKOP at the National Press Club in the city to protest the killings of garment workers in Chittagong and labourers in Dhaka recently. In a written statement at the conference, Trade Union Sangstha President Khaliqui Rahman said more than 400 workers were killed and 1500 others injured in fire at 35 garment factories across the country since 1990. SKOP leaders said if the government would have taken drastic

FF cries for justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Freedom fighter Sadequr Rahman Sadeq, president of Vagdi Adarsha Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity, yesterday alleged that some officials of Narsingdi Palli Bidyt Samity-2 have been harassing him and his family members by filing a case against them. The Palli Bidyt filed the case on April 6 last year three days after he filed a case against six of its officials with the Magistrate's Court for snapping his electricity connection and dismantling his electricity meter, Sadeq said at a press conference in Dhaka. He said that the Palli Bidyt workers snapped the electricity connection without showing any valid reason on April 1 last year. They also assaulted his wife, Sadeq alleged. He also alleged that Assistant Engineer of Palli Bidyt Samity Shafiqul Islam who rented a portion of his (Sadeq) house at Vagdi in Narsingdi had instructed the workers to do so following a personal feud with him (Sadeq). Sadeq said he went to Narsingdi Police Station to file a general diary on the day, but the officer-in-charge refused to register the GD. So, he filed a case with the Magistrate's Court on April 3, 2005. But three days later, he said, Narsingdi police arrested him as the Palli Bidyt Samity filed a case accusing him and his family members of snatching money, gold chain and a mobile phone set of its employees. However, he was released on bail the next day. Sadeq also said the case filed by him has also been dismissed. 'I want justice and removal of corrupt officials from their job,' he said. Vice-President of Vagdi Bahumukhi Samity Habibur Rahman, Sadeq's wife Bilkis Begum, son Ashkur Rahman and daughters Soheli and Sumaya Rahman were also present at the press conference held at the National Press Club.

'Allow ETV to resume its transmission'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
ETV Viewers' Forum yesterday staged a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding immediate steps to allow the Ekushey Television (ETV) to resume its transmission and an end to harassment of the ETV authorities. Condemning the government for its dilly-dallying attitude over the allocation of frequency for the ETV, the forum leaders also demanded removal of all administrative hindrances to the transmission of the private satellite channel. They said the government has issued licences and allocated frequency to many new television channels owned by ministers and high-ups of the government so that these channels carry out campaign in its favour ahead of the national election. But only the ETV has been barred from broadcasting its programme, they added. Chief Coordinator of the forum Advocate Abu Sayed Sattar and Advocate Sarwar Kabir spoke during the demonstration. People from all walks of life, including cultural activists, students and teachers, took part in the demonstration. President assents to Bldg Construction (Amend) Bill
UNB, Dhaka
President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to the Building Construction (Amendment) Bill, 2006 passed in the 20th session of the eighth Parliament, said a hand-out.