

Ahmadiyyas relieved as peace restored in Sharishabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local administration's initiative restored peace in Sharishabari yesterday five days after bigots launched a hate campaign on the Ahmadiyyas of the upazila. The Ahmadiyya families resumed their daily activities yesterday following a successful meeting Tuesday night brokered by the Sharishabari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Al Amin. The minority community was literally confined into their houses and were barred from mixing up with other people of the area after the hatred started to engulf the area. The local UNO played the pivotal role in the meeting at the upazila headquarters and succeeded bringing peace and calm in

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Life-saving drugs become dearer

PINAKI ROY

Prices of different life-saving drugs especially those imported for cardiac, kidney, cancer, and surgery patients have shot up in recent months. In last two years, prices of some items have risen up to fourfold. Drug traders and the directorate of drug control authorities have said all imported medicines have gone up a bit lately due to increasing value of dollar. "Some drugs in the market are widely used but we do not approve of them. Prices of those are beyond our control," said Dr Abdul Hakim, deputy director of the drug control directorate. "Prices of the approved ones increased by not more than Tk 4," he added.

At different drugstores in the city, it has been found that prices of some medicines have increased by Tk 1000 per unit. Thousands of patients are now on the verge of being abandoned by drug control authorities with the connivance of Directorate of Drug Administration, who have raised the prices unreasonably, said sources. When asked, the drug control authorities could not say the number of drug importers in the country and the number of items they import. Different drug traders said the price of Stilamin, an essential injection for cancer patients, was Tk 2,000 a few years ago, but now the same medicine sells at Tk 5,900. Hebabig injection for children would sell at Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,000

three to four months ago while now it costs at least Tk 4,025. The adult version of the same medicine, which would sell at Tk 4,000, now sells at Tk 5,000. "Prices of most of the medicines have increased more or less by 20 per cent in recent months due to increase in dollar price. And some items which are short in supply are being sold at higher rates," said Anwar Hossain, general manager of Lazz Pharma Ltd. Oroxyne, a hormonal medicine, would cost Tk 276 for a pack of 200 tablets (each 50mg) a year ago. Recently, the importer has raised the price to Tk 600 for the same pack. The same tablet (pack of 200pcs) of 100mg, marketed under

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Bangladesh needs \$10b to ease power woes

Says World Bank

Bangladesh needs 10 billion dollars in investment over the next 10 years to alleviate its massive power shortage, the World Bank said yesterday. The nation faces an average daily shortfall of 700 to 800 megawatts as demand rises due to fast economic growth. But this shortfall can peak as high as 2,000 megawatts when ageing plants are shut for maintenance. "To improve the situation, an estimated investment, both public and private, at taka 700 billion, or roughly 10 billion dollars, will be needed over the next 10 years," the bank said in a statement. The bank announced a 275-million-dollar soft loan for

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PHOTO: STAR

Students of Asian University of Bangladesh demonstrate against the administration burning tyres and chanting slogans to press home their 24-point demand on the university's Uttara campus yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

People search for their belongings from the remains of their destroyed houses in Pangandaran of Java in Indonesia yesterday.

Why recruitment of 89 staff not illegal

HC asks Islamic University

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule on Islamic University authorities to explain within two weeks why its recruitment of 89 employees in 53 ranks will not be declared illegal. The rule came after a writ petition filed as public interest litigation by Supreme Court Advocate ZI Khan challenging the legality of the university's appointments based on its syndicate decision on May 18 and 19 last. The petitioner said all public universities require approval of the University Grants Commission for any recruitment. But the Islamic University did not obtain this approval. The Islamic University has an annual budget deficit of Tk 9 crore.

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Syndicate behind price hike identified

Says commerce minister, asks for action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday said intelligence agencies have already traced the syndicate, which is responsible for the skyrocketing price of essentials, and urged the concerned ministry to take action against the group. The top wholesalers and traders of essentials echoed with the minister in a meeting saying a syndicate of 10-15 traders control the commodities market and cause the price hike of essentials. The minister said, "Even though it is not the duty of the Ministry of Commerce to track down the syndicate but our intelligence agencies have already traced the group." "I hope the concerned ministry

will take appropriate actions against the syndicate," he added. He said there is an investigation going on to find out the group of people who control the price of essential items. Meanwhile, the minister also accused the media and retailers of having a hand behind the price hike of the essentials. "When wholesalers sell ginger at Tk 30 per kilogram, the retailers sell the same thing at Tk 55, this is unacceptable," the minister said. After assuming the ministry office on April 25, 2006, Hafizuddin said the government would stop the price escalation of essentials within a couple of months. But the prices of most items have increased. About his earlier commitment

the minister said, "I meant sugar prices then because I knew about the government's measures to cut duty on a number of items in the 2005-06 budget." He said it is not only the responsibility of the commerce ministry to tackle the price hike of essentials. The finance ministry, agriculture ministry and home ministry also have a part to play, he said adding that it was unfortunate that the media blames only the commerce ministry for price hikes. Earlier, the government had taken a number of steps to hold back the climbing price of essential items but those actions were not so fruitful, he said.

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Pakistan peace process hit by Mumbai blasts, but not stopped

Says Indian PM

AFP, New Delhi

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said the peace process with Pakistan had been hit but not halted by the deadly train bombings in Mumbai, the media reported Wednesday. "I think the dialogue process has suffered but I won't say it is a setback," Singh told reporters on his way back from an international meeting in Russia. "I think it is inevitable that in the light of this ghastly tragedy we need to reflect on our relations with Pakistan." New Delhi has not officially blamed Pakistan-based militants for the seven train bombings in Mumbai last week in which 182 people were killed, but said the attackers received help from "across the border." Although Pakistan denied the charge, India decided to postpone high-level talks with its neighbour scheduled to begin Thursday to review a slow-moving peace process between the arch-rivals. Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said on Tuesday it would be unfortunate if the peace process between the nuclear-armed rivals launched in January 2004 stalled. "We must not allow such terrorist acts to undermine the historic opportunity for lasting peace between Pakistan and India," the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan quoted him as saying.

JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY Shibir planned control on campus long ago

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS)'s latest showdown with two other student organisations in Jagannath University is nothing but a part of the master plan that ICS had plotted years back to establish supremacy in the university, sources said. ICS, the student wing of the ruling coalition Jamaat-e-Islami, has been spreading out its virtual wings of influence in and around the university campus to conduct political activities with the help of patrons in the university faculty and leaders

of their parent organisation. Shibir had tried to prove their supremacy on the campus at least four times before, but without any success. They so far seem to be dedicated in reaching their goal. Some students alleged that ICS have become so influential that most of the private off-campus student housing facilities (messes) at Laksmibazar, Keraniganj, Gendaria, Dhupkhola, Banglabazar and some other areas are either owned or run by ICS followers. Housing seeking regular students sometimes find it difficult to

get a suitable housing in these messes as their political affiliation with ICS is often a pre-requisite there. Student messes play an important role for the non-resident students, as several thousand students have to find housing in one of these messes each year. Currently, 34 thousand students are enrolled in Jagannath University. Sources said ICS also have a

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2 probe bodies formed after students-locals clash in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two probe committees were formed yesterday to investigate the fierce clash between Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) students and locals that left at least 25 injured at Pahartali on Tuesday night. Locals barricaded Chittagong-Kaptai road for three hours yesterday protesting the incident. They withdrew the barricade at 12:30pm after a two-hour meeting between Cuet authorities, local representatives and law enforcement agencies. At least 25 people including 15

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Biotech policy declared

RAFIQ HASAN

The government yesterday declared a National Biotechnology Policy in order to keep pace with the fast advancing field of modern biotechnology and achieve world class competence in the fields of research and innovation. A meeting of the National Taskforce on Biotechnology of Bangladesh (NTFBB) with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair gave final approval to the policy placed by the Ministry of Science, Information and Communication Technology. "The approval of National Biotechnology Policy will be considered as a milestone in our effort to

promote highest level of science and technology in this country," said Science and ICT Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan. "The policy will help increase agriculture productivity and food security as well contribute to poverty alleviation and ensuring higher quality of life," he told The Daily Star after the meeting. He said the policy will open up a new window of opportunity for the resource-starved country like Bangladesh. Under the new policy one can easily go into researches involving genetic engineering and open up new vista of innovation and development involving living cells, be it

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Govt-teachers talks delay as minister sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dialogue between the government and teachers on indefinite strike is being delayed as the prime minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and Education Minister Osman Farruk have fallen sick, sources said. However, contradicting the education minister's statement to reporters on Wednesday that the government is trying to talk will all groups of teachers in a dialogue, teachers claimed that they did not yet receive any formal invitation for the dialogue from the government. Non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas who have been observing indefinite strike at

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PHOTO: STAR

A water pump installed by Dhaka Wasa to pump out rainwater lies idle on Nazimuddin Road causing hindrance to traffic.

5 cops injured in shootout with gunrunners

4 held, 7 firearms recovered

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Five policemen and one suspected gunrunner were wounded in an exchange of fire as a police team foiled an arms-smuggling bid at Moghdaha in Rashidnagar area of Ramu upazila Tuesday night. Cox's Bazar SP Shahidullah Chowdhury said the clash ensued at about 10:00pm when Ramu Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Mahbulul Huq challenged the gang of five gunrunners trying to sail for Chittagong by a speedboat to sell 15 firearms. "As the arms smugglers were challenged, they opened fire on the police team. The police also retaliated by opening fire," said a spot account of the shootout. During the exchange of fire, OC Mahbulul Huq and four policemen and one smuggler, Abdul Gafur, suffered minor bullet wounds. Out of the consignment of 15 firearms, police recovered eight

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| Prayer Timing | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| July 20 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-15 | 4-50 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-54 | 6-58 |
| Esha | 8-15 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation