

Inside today International



Janata Dal said the credit for the "dirty hattrick" by Om Prakash Chautala becoming Chief Minister of Haryana should go exclusively to Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar. Page 5

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Young actors at Alliance Francaise presented three plays in French at a go entertaining the French speaking community. Page 3

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Summer fruit prices this year are well out of reach of general customers because of high tax on fruit import. Page 8

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Health



Simple preventions for better health. Some health tips to avoid common diseases. Page 6

NEWS BRIEFS

SSMC reopens

Classes at the Sir Salmullah Medical College (SSMC) resumed Saturday after a ten-day of unscheduled closure followed by a clash between rival students' groups.

British ship catches fire

LONDON, Mar 23: A British ship carrying 309 passengers put out an SOS message today after catching fire in the Atlantic. Lloyds shipping agency said, reports Reuters.

Floods in Iran

NICOSIA, Mar 23: Floods have destroyed more than 2,000 houses in 50 villages in eastern Iran and help was urgently needed to prevent further losses. Tehran Radio said Saturday, reports AP.

Sehri and Iftar timings

Human Day Last time for sehri Iftar
07:30 am 8:15 pm
08:00 am 8:30 pm
08:30 am 9:15 pm



Begum Khaleda Zia on the first day of her assuming official responsibility as Prime Minister Saturday receiving the first call from a Cabinet colleague.

—Star photo

Hammadi new Prime Minister, three Kurds inducted in cabinet

Saddam forms new government



Saadoun Hammadi, the new Prime Minister of Iraq. —AFP Photo

NICOSIA, Mar 23: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein formed a new government Saturday, official reports said, giving up the post of prime minister as he battles insurrections in the north and south, reports AP.

It was unclear whether Saddam would continue to rule with absolute power.

The official Iraqi News Agency said Saddam, 53, signed decrees appointing Shiite aide Saadoun Hammadi as Prime Minister and Tariq Aziz as Deputy Prime Minister.

In the old government, Hammadi had been Deputy Prime Minister and Aziz was foreign minister.

INA said Mohammed Hamza Al-Zubaidi, a senior leader of Iraq's ruling Baath Arab Socialist Party would also serve as Deputy Prime Minister. It said there would be 24 ministers in the new government.

The changes could be aimed at helping calm rebellions by Shiites in the south and Kurds in the north following Iraq's defeat in the Gulf

War three weeks ago.

At least three new government members are Kurds, and Hammadi is from the Shiite holy city of Karbala, where fighting has raged between government troops and Islamic rebels.

It was not immediately clear how much political power Hammadi would hold or whether he would be a figurehead behind Saddam. But he is considered a proponent of political and economic reform.

Saddam presumably retained the presidency, the chairmanship of the powerful Revolutionary Command Council and leadership of the ruling party, although the official reports did not specify.

Saddam had held the title of prime minister since taking power in 1979.

Official Baghdad Radio announced the re-appointment of at least 12 ministers to their same posts in the new cabinet.

These included: Ali Hasan Al-Majid, a cousin of Saddam, as Interior Minister; Staff Gen. Abd Al-Jabbar Khalil Shanshal

as Minister of State for Defense Affairs; Staff Lt. Gen. Sadi Tumah Abbas as Defense Minister, and Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel Hassan, as Minister of Military Industrialisation, Industry and Oil.

Al-Majid has been labelled by opponents as the "butcher of the Kurds" for leading an attack on the Kurdish town of Halabjah in March 1988 in which thousands of people reportedly died from chemical weapons.

Ahmad Hussein Khudayyir Al-Sammaraei is the new Foreign Minister, Baghdad Radio said. He had been chief of the president's office.

Hammadi also served as minister of state for foreign affairs in the old government and was a member of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council. He was the Speaker of Parliament from 1980 to 1989 and was foreign minister in 1973-80.

Aziz, who also was a deputy prime minister in the previous government, became well known in the months leading

up to the Gulf War as a top spokesman for Saddam to the West. He has been associated with Saddam since the 1950s in the Baath Party in its attempts to overthrow the British-backed monarchy.

Aziz, from the northern city of Mosul, has long been viewed as one of the chief ideologues of the Baath Party. He was editor of the party newspaper Al-Thawra until 1979.

Meanwhile, as Iraq and the US-led allies worked toward a permanent truce, there was word American forces would stay in southern Iraq to assure that the Baghdad government complies with allied demands.

Gen Colin Powell, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in newspaper reports published Saturday that the forces would remain in southern Iraq for "some months to come."

Despite the US presence and the shooting down of two Iraqi jets by US fighters this week, Powell said the allies did not intend to intervene in Iraq's civil strife.

China to finance 200-bed hospital

Star Report

China is likely to finance a 200-bed ultramodern hospital project in Dhaka soon, Health Ministry sources say.

The construction cost of the proposed hospital is estimated to be around Tk 200 crore. The entire amount will be given as grant to Bangladesh by the Chinese government.

The sources say the hospital will be located either at Rampura or at Demra. A feasibility study has already been carried out by the Chinese government.

The site for the proposed hospital will also be finalised shortly, Health Ministry sources say. Page 10 Col 4

Jail revolt at Chittagong

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 23: At least 20 people were injured in a revolt by the inmates of Chittagong Central Jail this evening.

This is the third jail revolt here in last four months. Eight prisoners were killed and many others wounded in 11 revolts in the country's six jails since the fall of Ershad government in December last.

Sources said the jail guards beat up the rebellious prisoners who came out of their lockups breaking open their gates. Earlier, the prisoners

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Wastage aggravates acute water shortage

Star Report



Water going waste at Wiseghat.

—Star photo

While the city dwellers are facing an acute water shortage large quantities of water, supplied by Dhaka WASA, are being wasted everyday.

The WASA could supply more water to its consumers if this wastage was stopped.

Inadequate water supply in Dhaka city remains a regular phenomenon since long and the situation has deteriorated recently.

The prevailing scarcity of water in most parts of the metropolis is causing sufferings for the people, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

The areas in the city, badly affected by water scarcity since last week are — Jatrabari, Tikatuly, Gopibagh, Ram Krishna Mission Road, Maghbazar, Jhikatala, Mohammadpur, parts of Dhanmondi, Indira Road, Rajabazar, Nakhla, Rampura and other areas.

Reduction of Dhaka WASA's production by 15 per cent has been identified by authorities as one of the main reasons for the recent crisis, while some mechanical faults in the supply system are also responsible for the problem.

Authorities admitted that the wastage of a huge quantity of WASA water has also contributed to the crisis. Page 10 Col 7

BNP-AL backstage parleys

By Moinuddin Naser

Backstage parleys are in progress to initiate a dialogue between the BNP and the Awami League to narrow down their major differences on certain national issues.

The two parties sharply differ on some issues which may cause Acting President Justice Shahabuddin difficulties in preparing his speech for the inaugural session of Parliament on April 5 unless both the BNP and the Awami League come to a minimum understanding.

Political observers strongly feel that a dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition should be a continuous process for the smooth functioning of parliament.

Both political and administrative initiatives are learnt to be in progress. Page 10 Col 6

'Black Day' today

Star Report

Today is March 24. On this day in 1982 General H. M. Ershad seized power from President Justice Abdus Sattar in a military coup.

Justice Sattar was elected President on November 15, 1981 and Ershad forcibly took over power only after four months.

During his nearly nine years' rule Ershad destroyed the democratic institutions and corruption was rampant in the administration. He suppressed the voice of the people by imposing restrictions on political activities and closing down newspapers one after another.

He destroyed the institution of elections by large-scale rigging. The mainstream political parties led by BNP and Awami League and the student organisations together spearheaded the movement against the autocratic regime in October last year, which culminated into a mass upsurge in December. Ershad had to step down handing over power to Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed on December 6.

The interim government held a free and fair election on February 27, in which BNP won. Page 10 Col 5

Sugandha may be converted into PM's office

By Staff Correspondent

State guest house 'Sugandha' may be converted into the Prime Minister's office, reliable sources say.

The new Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia visited the guest house to explore this on Saturday after formally starting her office duties at the Establishment Ministry.

'Sugandha', popularly called the 'Old Ganabhaban', is being used as state guest house since 1984 when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom visited Bangladesh and used the house.

It was used as Prime Minister's office by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and was named Ganabhaban. Subsequently the PM's office was shifted to the 'New Ganabhaban' at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Indian special envoy due soon

A special envoy of Indian government is likely to visit Dhaka shortly to have a first-hand view of the changing political scenario in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka indicated Saturday Indian Foreign Secretary Mukund Dubey is expected to make the trip, carrying a special message from Chandra Shekhar, Prime Minister of the caretaker government of his country.

Ershad retains Rangpur-3 seat

By Staff Correspondent

Deposed President H M Ershad, who won elections in five constituencies in the parliamentary polls will retain his Rangpur-3 seat.

The ex-president in a letter on Friday informed the Election Commission about his decision.

As a result, four more parliamentary seats of Rangpur-1, 2, 5 and 6 have fallen vacant.

Dissident republics can quit : Gorbachev

BONN, Mar 23: Dissident Soviet republics can quit the Soviet Union if they feel like it, provided they respect the constitutional procedure for doing so, Der Spiegel quotes President Mikhail Gorbachev as saying, report Agencies.

Republics which quit the federation would have relations with Moscow based on international law, it quotes him as saying in Monday's edition.

"We should adopt the same position in this respect as we used to do with regard to Eastern Europe," he said, in a reference to the time when the Soviet Union had close allies on communist Eastern Europe.

Gorbachev, Der Spiegel said reiterated his desire to end "totalitarianism" in the Soviet Union. He admitted that he had made some mistakes, but

said he intended to push ahead with a programme to privatise some Soviet state firms, Der Spiegel said.

He appealed to "the solidarity with the German people" to help the Soviet Union through the current phase of perestroika, Der Spiegel said.

Meanwhile communist hardliners have given notice of a bitter power battle at Thursday's Russian Congress session,

accusing populist Russian Federation leader Boris Yeltsin of blazing the way to a radical dictatorship.

Vladimir Isakov, one of six senior figures in the Russian Parliament who demanded Thursday's special session to debate Yeltsin's leadership, was quoted today as accusing his former ally of deliberately splitting the country. Leningrad Party Secretary

Yuri Byelov, attacking radical Yeltsin allies, raised a charge increasingly common among hardliners reverting to Cold War terminology. The "counter-revolution" they promote, he said, came from the West.

Yeltsin, who has himself accused Mikhail Gorbachev of heading towards dictatorship, hinted at an approaching battle in a speech in Leningrad on Friday when he declared he no

longer saw any room for compromise with the Soviet President.

He insists Gorbachev, far from seeking a renewed democratic Soviet Union, wants only to retain central communist control over the country's 15 constituent republics. For his part, the Soviet President accuses his erstwhile protégé of deceiving the people with empty promises.