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Inside today

International



Philippine President Corazon Aquino, charged with mis-managing economy by opposition, said she is confident Filipinos would see through the motives of politicians and journalists who attack her.
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Article

Which law will be used for Gulf war claims?

The issue of war crimes trials and reparations following the Gulf war will bring to the fore a serious divergence of views within the US-led coalition. While the US is intent on using western international law, Islamic nations may press for applying principles of Islamic law.
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Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



The Bangladesh Photographic Society's annual exhibition has failed from the artistic point of view.
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NEWS BRIEFS

80 killed in Scud attack

PESHAWAR, Mar 31: A Scud missile fired by the Afghan government killed or wounded at least 80 Mujahideen at a guerrilla base near the Pakistan border, guerrilla sources said today.

Soviet Air Force chief in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Mar 31: Soviet Air Force chief Colonel General Y. I. Shaposhnikov arrived here today for a six-day visit during which he is to hold talks with Indian defence officials.

Iranian team in Riyadh

RIYADH, Mar 31: An Iranian Foreign Ministry delegation arrived here Saturday to reopen Tehran's embassy in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and Iran announced a resumption of diplomatic relations March 20. They were broken off by Riyadh in April 1988, reports AFP.

Jyoti Basu blasts Siddarth Shankar

MADRAS, Mar 31: West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu today criticised WBCC (I) President, Siddarth Shankar Ray for demanding the dismissal of the Left Front government in the state.

Dubey hands over Shekhar's message to Khaleda

India ready to discuss all outstanding issues

By Staff Correspondent

India has agreed to enter a dialogue at all levels with Bangladesh with a view to resolving existing bilateral issues.

The offer was made by the Indian Premier Chandra Shekhar in a letter which was handed over to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia by Indian Foreign Secretary and Special Envoy Muchkund Dubey on Sunday.

Prime Minister Begum Zia expressed the hope that bilateral cooperation with India would be better developed if the existing problems between the two countries were resolved.

She said this during her talks with Muchkund Dubey adding that ties with India would be strengthened in the future.

The Indian Premier in his letter said that India would like to work with Bangladesh to establish a mutually beneficial relationship and to adopt a common approach in dealing with various problems faced by the world community.

The Indian Premier in his message also laid emphasis on entering a dialogue at all levels to resolve outstanding issues

between the two countries. Chandra Shekhar hoped that he would have an opportunity to meet Begum Zia soon.

The Indian Premier also asked Begum Zia when would she like to visit Ajmer saying that such a visit would create an opportunity to discuss bilateral issues.

Begum Zia will be treated as See Page 10 Col 1



Muchkund Dubey, Special Envoy of Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, handing over a message of the Indian Premier to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Secretariat office Sunday. —PID photo

Dubey discusses political situation with Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Indian Prime Minister's special envoy and Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey on Sunday called on Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence.

They discussed issues related to mutual and general interest.

Sheikh Hasina was accompanied by party general secretary Sajeda Chowdhury and Presidium Member Abdul Mannan while Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh K. Srinivasan was with the visiting foreign secretary.

About his talks with Sheikh Hasina Dubey later said he discussed matters of general interest and political situation particularly after the "triumph of democracy in Bangladesh". He said he also talked about the future democratic process also.

When asked to comment on Sheikh Hasina's recent demand for sealing off the India- See Page 10 Col 1

Policy reforms vital for winning donors' trust

By Moazzem Hossain

Most immediate and urgent steps are needed for policy reforms to improve the overall performance of the economy and win the trust and confidence of the donor community.

The seven-member Task Force on Bangladesh's relations with development partners stressed this in its report submitted to the government last month.

It said any effective re-evaluation or reshaping of existing dependent relationship of Bangladesh, as the recipient of aid, with the external donor

agencies or countries will be impossible without sustained efforts for an improved economic performance.

The seven-member Task Force with M. Moniruzzaman, former secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) or erstwhile external resources division, as its convener noted in its report that the recent political changes unfolded "realistic opportunities" to improve country's relations with donor countries or agencies to a respectable level. It termed the existing See Page 10 Col 3

12 Narsingdi prisoners loot armoury, flee

NARSINGDI, Mar 31: Twelve under trial prisoners today escaped from the Narsingdi jail with arms and ammunition, reports UNB.

The prisoners overpowered the sentries at the jail gate and looted seven rifles, four bayonets and 46 round of bullets from the jail armoury before fleeing at sundown.

Jail sources said the incident took place soon after the prisoners were brought to the jail from the Judge's Court at a time when most of the jail guards were having iftar.

They said the prisoners who were unshackled at the jail gate at about 6.30 pm suddenly attacked the two jail guards with chair and iron rod, snatched away the key of the armoury and looted the arms and ammunition.

The escaped prisoners are: Shahidullah, Amiruddin, Misnur Rahman, Abdur Rahman, Zakir Hossain, Vilu, Sadequr Rahman, Khorshed, Shahi-

dullah, Hanif, Ilias and Liton.

Dhaka central jail

Meanwhile, our Staff Correspondent reports: an under trial prisoner was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Sunday night after he was allegedly injured by a convict in Dhaka Central Jail.

The injured Shaiful Islam Swapan told reporters in the hospital bed that the convict Mosharraf snatched his 'lungi' and sandal and when he demanded those back Mosharraf stabbed him with a broken bottle.

Swapan who is a new inmate of the jail also alleged that some prisoners have been taking drugs inside the jail freely.

There was agitation among the under trial prisoners and the convicts but the central jail authorities denied any clash between them. However, uneasy calm has been prevailing, a jail official agreed.

JP MPs challenge election to reserved seats

Supreme Court Correspondent

Three members-elect of Parliament belonging to Jatiya Party have challenged the election to the reserved seats for women.

In a writ petition filed Sunday before Justice Fazle Husain Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury of the High Court Division they stated that unless all the members-elect of Parliament take oath of office the electoral college for election of women members cannot be formed. Citing Article 4 of the Representation of People (Seats for Women Members) Order, 1973 they said they had been deprived of their constitutional right of nominating women candidates of their See Page 10 Col 1

Report on allegation of corruption against Ershad submitted

The three-member enquiry commission which was set up to investigate the allegations of corruptions, malpractices and misuse of powers against former President H.M. Ershad and some of his ministers presented the first part of its report to the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at President's secretariat Sunday, reports BSS.

The commission headed by Justice D.M. Ansaruddin Ahmed in its first part report said it had examined 53 allegations against them so far and found sufficient prima facie evidence in respect of 43 allegations.

The commission is continuing its work for completion of its remaining task. The commission has expressed the view that the report should be published for general information.

UNB adds: The Enquiry Commission has so far found sufficient prima facie evidence in 43 allegations against ousted See Page 10 Col 1

Hearing of writ challenging Wage Board award

The hearing of the writ petition challenging the implementation of the Wage Board Award for journalists and other employees began Sunday before a Division Bench of the High Court Division comprising Justice Mohammad Abdul Jalil and Justice Kazi Shafuluddin, reports BSS. Khondker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, the petitioner's See Page 10 Col 3

Leasing of ghats: distribution of favours to end

Ministry of Shipping plans to eliminate a practice of favour distribution in leasing out inland water transport ghats by putting all to auction.

The measure is intended to generate some surplus for replacing worn out pontoons, and supplying new pontoons at important kutchas ghats.

Out of 232 ghats of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority having pontoons, 171 were until last year leased out on a yearly basis through auction while 61 others were distributed to various associations at the discretion of the ministry.

The associations could never pay the full revenue and IWTA authorities were deprived of a sizeable amount of income every year.

A high-level meeting at the ministry discussed the plan to lease out 204 ghats through auction and 28 ghats once through sealed tenders. See Page 10 Col 8

Soviet Foreign Minister in Beijing

BEIJING, Mar 31: Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh arrived in Beijing tonight for his first visit to China, and said he was optimistic about talks with Chinese leaders, reports Reuters. The visit is another sign that relations between the two giant Communist neighbours are improving, diplomats said. One of the main aims of the visit will be to set the stage for See Page 10 Col 8

BNP yet to decide who will chair JS opening session

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has not yet taken any decision whether Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury is acceptable to preside over the opening session of Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) on April 5.
BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talking to See Page 10 Col 5

20 killed as nor'wester hits country

By Staff Correspondent

At least 20 persons were killed and about 270 injured, 50 of them seriously, as Nor'wester lashed different areas all over the country from Thursday to Sunday.

The storm killed 12 in Seraganj, 8 in Comilla and 2 in Dhamrai and one Harirampur. Our Comilla Correspondent reports: Five persons were killed and about 200 injured,

50 seriously, as Nor'wester lashed Comilla town on Sunday afternoon.

Of the dead, four persons could be identified. They are Abbas Ali (75), Kazi Nazrul Islam (10), Ali Akbar and Sujam (12). Some seriously injured are: Babul (8), Manir (10), Fatunnessa (60), Farid (35), Moqbul Hossain Master (45), Munni (7), Mrs. Razia (40) and

Ripon (2). The Nor'wester hit Noapara, Champaknagar, Satra, Shasanganicha in the western part of the town and adjoining village. More than 500 houses were destroyed and about 30 electric poles were either uprooted or damaged. Eyewitnesses and Superintendent of Police, Comilla estimated the amount of loss at

about Taka 1 crore. Electricity supply in the town was cut off and couldn't be restored as the electricity office was also badly damaged.

The wall and the roof of the local BADC seed preservation centre collapsed. Seeds worth Taka two lakhs were damaged. Telecommunication lines of six upazilas — Burtchong, Laksham, Choudagram, Barura, Chandina and Brahmanpara with Comilla Sadar have also snapped.

A four-member medical team has been working under the supervision of Civil Surgeon, Comilla.

Police and fire bridge personnel are conducting rescue operations. Our Manikganj Correspondent See Page 10 Col 7

AK Khan dead

AK Khan, a former Central Minister of Pakistan and a pioneer among industrialists of Bangladesh, died of heart attack Sunday evening at his Gulshan residence in Dhaka. He was 85, reports BSS.

Born in 1905 at village Mohara, Kalurghat under Chandgaon upazila of Chittagong, AK Khan had a long background in the field of politics and in pioneering entrepreneurship in industries. He had a brilliant academic career and had his graduation from the Presidency College, Calcutta, obtaining First Class. He joined Judicial Service in 1934 and continued in the job until 1940, when he quit the government service to join politics. He played an important role in the independence struggle of Indo-Pakistan during the British rule.

AK Khan was elected a member of the constituent Assembly of India in 1946 on the eve of independence and See Page 10 Col 7



Albanian President Ramiz Alia casts his ballot Sunday in the first free election in over 40 years. Story on Page 5. —AFP photo

Step to rejuvenate ailing public sector banks

By Shahiduzzaman Khan

Government will issue bonds worth Tk 1700 crore as capital financing to the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) shortly. The move has been taken to rejuvenate the NCBs suffering from liquidity crisis.

Bangladesh Bank sources say, an amount of Tk 150 crore is being earmarked in the next budgetary provisions for paying the NCBs as interests from the public exchequer. The amount will be realised by imposing fresh taxes in the next budget.

A high-level meeting on the banking sector last month made a critical review of the performances of the NCBs. The meeting noted with concern that capital shortage faced by the NCBs was mainly due to mismanagement in the operational procedures and corruption by a section of bank employees.

The NCBs gave loans to the borrowers without examining the feasibility of each and every project. According to new loan classifications of Bangladesh Bank, a huge amount of loans provided by the NCBs has become bad or doubtful debts. The new procedures obliged the NCBs to show these debts as liabilities, not assets.

Expressing its dissatisfaction over the outstanding loans and mismanagement in the lending procedures, the meeting called for taking immediate effective measures to check further deterioration of the banking system.

The meeting noted with concern at the volume of classified loans compared to overall credit scenario.

Under the financial sector reforms programme, each public and private sector bank

will classify their own loans given to the borrowers as doubtful or bad debts. Banking circles says, if the volume of classified loans is increased, the amount of profit and bonus will automatically be reduced and share prices will be influenced. The private banks will also be affected while the nationalised banks will not be in a position to offer bonuses to their employees.

One of the major conditions for releasing second tranche of financial sector credit is to achieve target of loan recovery from 100 big defaulters. The recovery rate is really poor, the meeting noted. This will leave negative impact on country's whole economy. All nationalised banks must go all-out to recover the huge amount of outstanding loans from 100 big defaulters. See Page 10 Col 2

Communists abandon idea of ousting Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Mar 31: Hardline communists, fearful of Russian leader Boris Yeltsin's immense popularity, appear to have abandoned any idea of trying to oust him as head of his republic at the current session of its parliament, reports Reuters.

Yeltsin sustained fierce criticism of his combative stand against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in the Congress of People's Deputies and he failed to secure a debate on his plan for an elected

executive president.

But calls for a no confidence vote in Yeltsin — the main reason for convening the special five-day session — have been quietly forgotten despite impassioned debate.

Even an emotional address by one of Yeltsin's most vocal opponents, Svetlana Goryacheva, contained no suggestion that he ought to step aside.

Yeltsin, who was due to defend his record again in Sun-

day's debate, is by far the country's most popular politician and would almost certainly win a direct presidential election.

He denied that failure to push his legislative agenda through parliament would prompt fresh elections, at which reformists could well secure a comfortable majority.

"I am not in favour of dissolving the Congress," he said in response to a question from a liberal deputy.

Yeltsin's Prime Minister, Ivan Silayev, set down economic priorities clearly at odds with the Kremlin's cautious policies, calling for rapid changes to give producers free rein and shift more quickly to market mechanisms.

Silayev said the time was long past when painless transition was possible, and quick measures were now needed to stop output falling even further and end chaos in economic links throughout the country.

"For too long we preserved our socialist virginity and saw in each real step towards the (free) market as an unavourable retreat to practices established throughout the world from Shanghai to New York," he said.

AP adds: Voters in the southern republic of Georgia crowded polling booths Sunday to cast ballots in a referendum on independence, and the pro-secession Georgian President said he was sure of victory. "The desired result is 100

per cent 'Yes', declared Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the recently elected Georgian nationalist leader who has made independence from Moscow his top priority.

Between 50 to 70 per cent of the republic's 3.3 million eligible voters had turned out by mid-day, according to news reports and officials.

The Georgian vote was the fourth of six independence polls held in Soviet republics seeking autonomy.