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Inside Today

Article

And Now — the World's First Summit for First Ladies

The wives of up to 70 international heads of state are to meet in Geneva (Feb 26-27) to discuss the changing role of rural women. Some onlookers consider the First Ladies Summit little more than an ineffectual public relations exercise for the women. Others have a different view
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Dhaka Day by Day



Dr Peter R Rankilor, an Indian-born British scientist, has been working on geo-textile for the last two decades and has made the technology popular worldwide
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NEWS BRIEFS

White paper on 2 ministries

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul-Haq Monday handed over white paper on misdeeds in two ministries by the past autocratic government to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office. The government has committed to make public reports of corruption and mismanagement by the nine-year autocratic rule in different ministries and public sector corporations, reports UNB.

Riot police posted in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Feb 24: Riot police were posted at vulnerable points of the town this evening as sporadic clashes continued since Sunday night between the activists of the student wings of Awami League and BNP. At least five people, reportedly workers of the Chhatra League, were injured in three separate clashes in the town today, local Awami League leaders claimed. The encounter between activists of the two rival organisations started when district Chhatra League brought out a procession Sunday evening demanding release of President of Madarganj upazila Chhatra League unit, reports UNB.

Thousands of Rohingyas live under open sky

Myanmar Refugee Fund soon

The government yesterday (Monday) decided to open a separate relief fund for tens of thousands of Rohingyas who fled Myanmar and have taken shelter in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The decision to open "Myanmar Refugee Fund" for better coordination in utilising foreign donation and relief work was taken at a high-level meeting on the "Rohingya issue."

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury chaired the meeting held at the Home Ministry conference room.

The meeting elaborately discussed the problem and its immediate solution.

Decisions were also taken

in the meeting on various matters, including rapid repatriation of Rohingyas refugees, operation of relief work in coordinated form and coordination among relevant ministries.

State Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Lutfor Rahman Khan, Secretaries of different ministries and heads of relevant departments attended the meeting.

BSS from Cox's Bazar says, the plight of the Rohingyas refugees here worsened further following heavy rains for the last three days.

Temporary camps raised by the local administration are inadequate to cope with the situation created by continuous

flux of Rohingyas which forced thousands of Muslim refugees to live under open sky, eye witnesses said.

During the last four days more than six thousand Rohingyas crossed into Bangladesh territory through different border points from Arakan state with experiences of atrocities, arson, intimidation and eviction by Myanmar military.

A BSS correspondent who visited a number of border areas including Naf river yesterday morning witnessed hundreds of displaced people heading towards different refugee camps either on foot or on various mechanised boats

defying rains. Muslim refugees, both young woman and children, were seen queuing up in wet cloths for relief materials at different places.

Some of them told this correspondent that even they could not bring their clothes as the members of Myanmar security forces looted away all their belongings.

As the authorities are yet to construct required number of camps the refugees are indiscriminately cutting trees from forests for building temporary shelters.

Forest Department sources told this correspondent that valuable trees and nurseries had already been damaged by the refugees at several places.

MPs advised to maintain low profile

BNP extended meet likely to be stormy

By Mahfuz Ullah

With the leadership trying to consolidate the organization and the workers expressing concern over the political course of action, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) holds its two-day extra extended meeting of the Executive Committee.

The meeting begins today at three pm at Sugandha. Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting.

In the backdrop of an impending reshuffle of the Cabinet, party insiders attach importance to the meeting which, according to a notification, will discuss, among other

things, organisational matters and national and international situation.

All members of the Standing Committee, the Advisory Council, the Executive Committee, all Party MPs, all candidates who lost the last general election and presidents and general secretaries of the party units upto thana level have been asked to attend the meeting.

The meeting, first of its kind this year, will seek frank opinion from party leaders, insiders say. The performances of the party during the recent session of Parliament will also

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Kiwis hope to maintain their winning spree

BRISBANE, Feb 24: New Zealand hopes to put pressure on its World Cup rivals by beating Sri Lanka in Hamilton on Tuesday and moving to the top of the first round standings, reports AP.

New Zealand lifted its morale by beating defending

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Armed clash leaves several hurt at Sadarghat

By Staff Correspondent

Several people were injured as two clashing groups fired gun-shots and exploded crackers at Sadarghat Launch Terminal Monday night.

The clash broke out at about 6:30 pm when the launch workers declined to give money to the extortionists and chased them. Chase and counter chase continued for half an hour, Kotawal police said.

The Launch Owners Association claims that around one hundred people were injured when a group of armed people numbering around 40 attacked the launch workers after they had been refused by the workers.

Without giving any specific number, a leader of the association said that several launches had been damaged and ransacked during the attack by the extortionists.

Of the injured persons, Mohammad Nannu and Shikder, two workers, were admitted to the National Hospital and several others were given first aid there, the hospital officials said.

Kotawal police said they went to the spot immediately after the clash was over. None has been arrested in this connection so far, said police.

National policy okayed

Tourism to be made industry

The cabinet Monday approved the National Tourism Policy at the weekly meeting held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.

The National Tourism Policy aims at developing tourism as an industry, providing necessary facilities usually given to the industries to attract the private sector investments in the field.

The policy also aims at attracting tourists from abroad to augment foreign exchange earnings, develop and preserve tourist resources and resorts of the country and alleviate poverty creating employment opportunities.

Ministers, state ministers-in-charge of different ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and secretaries concerned were present.

Jamaat leader warns to 'thwart' move against Golam Azam

MYMENSINGH, Feb 24: Jamaat leader Abdul Kader Mollah expressed his firm determination to resist all activities of rival political parties against the nationality issue of Golam Azam, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference here today Abdul Kader Mollah, central Publicity Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami said Prof Golam Azam was a citizen of Bangladesh by birth and the government had no right to expel him from the country.

His election as Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami was a recognition of his nationality, the Jamaat leader said adding that he (Golam Azam) had legal base to stay in the country.

Refuting the allegations regarding the validity of Golam Azam's stay, he said Azam had replied to the Home Ministry twice and had been living in the country since 1978.

UNICEF to shift focus away from villages

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is likely to gradually shift its focus of development assistance in Bangladesh from the rural sector to urban areas.

Talking to UNB, UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh Cole P. Dodge said his agency's commitment to the country's development programme would certainly increase in the days ahead, but there would be a shift towards urban upliftment.

"Our assistance to Bangladesh will definitely increase, but we have decided to shift the emphasis from rural to urban development. We are particularly interested in the development of urban slums and their people," Dodge said.

UNICEF has proposed for about Tk 400 crore allocation for a two-year development programme from 1993. The agency is now working on its new strategy for development assistance which will have an urban bias.

Justifying the shift in the policy in favour of urban development, Dodge said, "Many development agencies are investing in rural development, but very few concentrated on slum development."

He said the shift in the policy would help in establishing linkages between development activities in rural and urban areas.

UNICEF provides assistance in the fields of development of children and mother, education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, women, communication and information and integrated basic services.

Mideast peace talks begin

WASHINGTON, Feb 24: Israelis and Arabs resumed peace talks today against a background of violence and tension in the Middle East, reports Reuter.

Delegations representing Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinians from the occupied territories arrived at the State Department to resume talks adjourned last month.

None of the delegates spoke to reporters.

Diplomats and officials were expecting a stormy session and

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Banishing opposition from state affairs is autocracy: Hasina

GOPALGANJ, Feb 24: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today warned that the BNP government would have to face the same fate as that of its predecessors if it failed to take effective steps to improve the condition of the masses, reports UNB.

Addressing a big public meeting at Kotlipara upazila complex ground this afternoon, she alleged that BNP's wrong and imprudent governance had further deepened crises in every vital sectors leading to unrest and agitation among the people.

Hasina said Opposition had extended cooperation to the government for salvaging the economy, but the party in power had turned down the offer.

"They do not want to involve the Opposition in state affairs lest their corruption, misappropriation and nepotism are exposed", she said, adding "rejection of the Opposition's cooperation in development activities means restoration of autocracy."

Referring to the Prime Minister's remarks that vested quarters were conspiring to obstruct the development activities, Hasina asked why the government was not taking legal measures against them, if those quarters were identified and allegations proved true.

Referring to canal digging programme, the Opposition leader alleged that the ruling party was distributing wheat among its own people under this programme.

She accused the government of spending crores of taka in unproductive sectors without providing subsidy to

agriculture sector. "The government leaders are wasting money from public exchequer touring different parts of the country by helicopters."

Hasina rebuked the ruling party for trying to move the "so-called" anti-terrorism bill and said the bill was designed to curtail the democratic and fundamental rights of the people.

"Right to hartal, demonstration and siege are indispensable means of democratic policy but the government is now conspiring to curtail these rights of the people to consolidate its power."

The anti-terrorism bill, she observed, is similar to the Enquiry and Coordination Bill of the Ershad regime aimed at curbing people's fundamental rights.

Recalling BNP's pre-election commitment to scrap the Special Powers Act, Hasina said those who declared that the Act would be rescinded within one hour of taking over power were now trying to deny people their minimum democratic rights.

She warned that none will be allowed to rule the country in autocratic style under the guise of democracy. "Awami League will preserve at any cost the democracy earned at the cost of blood."

Hasina accused the Prime Minister of trying to grant citizenship to "hated rajakar and war criminal" Prof Golam Azam.

President Zia once rehabilitated anti-liberation elements and allowed Golam Azam to enter the country, and now his wife is conspiring to grant him

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No halt to settlement: Shamir Choice is Israel's: Baker

WASHINGTON, Feb 24: The United States will only give Israel 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees in exchange for a total freeze to settlement activity in the occupied territories, Secretary of State James Baker said today, reports Reuter.

Testifying to a House of Representatives appropriations sub-committee, Baker said he had laid out two alternatives for Israel.

— Either it could halt settlement activity, including building infrastructure, in exchange for 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees over five years.

— or Israel could complete the houses it already has under construction as of January 1, 1992 but accept a lesser amount of money on a single year basis, with a dollar deducted for every dollar it spent on the settlements.

"The choice is Israel's,"

Baker said.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told Jewish settlers he would defy Washington and not stop settlement construction in the occupied lands "even for a day," an Israeli newspaper reported Monday, according to AP.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon also said Monday that Israel has started 2,000

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Budget session starts amid tight security

Opposition walks out as Venkataraman speaks

NEW DELHI, Feb 24: Opposition politicians boycotted India's parliament while others tried to shout down the country's President today as he committed the minority government to overhauling the state-dominated economy, reports Reuter.

President Ramaswamy Venkataraman was outlining government policy in his role as head of state at the opening of a crucial session at which Prime Minister Narasimha Rao will seek to push through what is expected to be one of India's

toughest budgets.

Earlier sharpshooters of the special protection force were deployed around the parliament house to further strengthen the security as the 10-week budget session began today, according to PTI.

Traffic, though not disrupted, was strictly regulated near the parliament house by setting up barricades and the plying police patrol vans on all the gates.

The number of vehicles entering the parliament premises has also been re-

stricted to facilitate free movement of security personnel. A thorough check of all the entering vehicles was also made.

Armed men have also been posted on the roof-tops of the high-rise buildings around parliament. The security men were drawn from NSG, BSF, CRPF, CISF and Delhi police.

Left-leaning parties boycotted the address while two or three dissidents succeeded in drowning out the President as he committed Rao to pursue

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Demonstrators opposed to new Indian economic policies in Delhi wave bangles (centre) and chant slogans saying Rao and his Finance Minister should wear those. The protest coincided with the opening of parliament yesterday. —AFP photo