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Bush declares Los An-
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Dhaka Day by Day



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NEWS BRIEFS

Ferry service normal

The Bangladesh Inland
 Water Transport Corporation
 (BIWTC) Sunday said that
 normal operation of ferries in
 Aricha-Nagarbari-Daulat dia,
 Strajanj-Bhuapur and Maoa-
 Charjanaj sectors had been
 continuing despite enhance-
 ment of ferry charges. A total
 of 740 heavy vehicles including
 trucks and private and BRTC
 buses were transported by the
 ferries since Sunday morning
 peacefully, reports BSS.

EEC envoys host lunch for Hasina

Ambassadors of the EEC
 countries in Bangladesh hosted
 a lunch in honour of Awami
 League President and
 Opposition leader Sheikh
 Hasina Sunday. British
 Ambassador Collin H. Imray,
 French Ambassador Serge
 Degallat, Belgium Ambassa-
 dor Xavier R.R. Van Migem,
 Netherlands Ambassador
 Henricus Gajentaan, German
 Charge d'Affaires Roland Graft,
 Counsellor at Danish Embassy
 J. Peter Pedersen and EEC
 mission head J. Rallly attended
 the luncheon at the residence
 of the French Ambassador,
 reports UNB.

30 injured in bus plunge

CHANDPUR, May 3: At least
 30 people were injured, six of
 them seriously, when a bus
 plunged into a roadside ditch
 on Chandpur-Comilla highway
 today. Witnesses and police
 said the Chandpur bound bus
 coming from Comilla with 50
 passengers on board, UNB.

Masood wants 'a progressive modern' Afghanistan

NEW DELHI, May 3: Commander Ahmed Shah Masood, Defence Minister in the Afghan Mujahideen council, has said that he would like Afghanistan to be a progressive modern state, reports PTI.

"My model for my state is not Iran," commander Masood said in an interview published by the Karachi-based English daily 'Dawn'.

He said "we are not fundamentalist but we want to run it as an Islamic state where Shariah is the law."

Asked about the relations with India, commander Masood said these would have to be viewed in the context of New Delhi's continued and strong support for the previous government.

He was angry about Pakist

an's encouragement to the Afghan fundamentalist leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

But for Pakistan's support, there would be no threat from Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Dawn quoted him as saying.

The interview was conducted at Charikar, about 60 km north of Kabul, just before he left for the Afghan capital last week.

Former Pakistan premier, MS Benazir Bhutto, meanwhile described the installation of the Mujahideen council in Kabul as a 'victory' of the Tajik commander Ahmad Shah Masood and 'not that of the Islamabad rulers.'

"Had the victory been achieved with the efforts of Pakistani rulers, then its representatives who recently vis-

ited Kabul would not have been attacked with rockets there," Ms Bhutto said while addressing rally at Bela, about 70 kms from Karachi, on Saturday.

Ms Bhutto asked the Pakistan government not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the Awami National Party (ANP) leader, Wali Khan has said that the stage is set for the return of Zahir Shah, the deposed king of Afghanistan.

In an interview in Peshawar, Khan said that big powers and the tussle of the Afghan leaders had created an atmosphere in Kabul in which no one other than Zahir Shah could restore peace.

AFP from Kabul says, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has

threatened to resume his attacks on Kabul if the new Islamic government does not remove Uzbek militia from the streets of the city within two to three days.

Journalists who interviewed Hekmatyar Saturday, said the bitter rival of northern Mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Masood had received them 55 kilometers (34 miles) south of Kabul, and told them his artillery was already capable of hitting the city.

The Uzbek militia, commanded by General Abdul Rashid Dostam, were at the forefront of last week's fight by the new government to keep Hekmatyar out of the city.

The journalists said Hekmatyar appeared ready to

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Former Afghan Chief Justice found dead

KABUL, May 3: Afghanistan's former Chief Justice was found dead today, his face and chest riddled with bullets, while a second minister has been abducted and is still missing, official sources said, reports Reuter.

The sources told reporters that former Chief Justice Karim Shardan was taken from his home by three armed men on Saturday evening. His body, showing signs of torture, was found the next morning.

Former Civil Aviation Minister Wadri Saft was also abducted on Saturday evening and is still missing, the sources said.

Speaking in Shardan's home where women could be heard wailing, the sources said that two nights ago unidentified men tried to kidnap Abdul Quddus Ghorbandi, a leading member of the formerly communist Watan party.



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (centre) stands with members of his militia yesterday in Sekhva, 34 miles off Kabul where he met with journalists and said if the new govt does not remove the Uzbek militia from the Afghan capital within two or three days he would resume attacks on Kabul. — AFP photo

Outcome of probe to decide NCL's restructuring

By Inam Ahmed and Sohel Manzur

The appeal of the National Credit Limited (NCL) to convert it into a scheduled bank might be considered only if the present inquiry exonerates it of malpractices or violation of rules.

This was stated by Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed yesterday while talking to The Daily Star.

The Finance Secretary further said that the NCL was under pressure from its clients and it had no other option but to restructure itself.

The matter, however, was entirely dependent on the management of the NCL, he said, adding that the Bangladesh Bank was conducting audit and investigations into the NCL's financial dealings and its papers.

He said that at present the Bangladesh Bank did not have enough materials to lodge a case or complaint against the NCL.

But the investigation report would be finalised soon, he said adding that the matter of considering the proposals of the NCL might come only after it was proved to be fair in its dealings.

The Finance Secretary,

further said that the matter of amending banking laws was under examination by the ministry concerned.

According to sources, a three-day audit and a criminal investigation into the NCL started Sunday.

Meanwhile, the NCL maintained some transactions Sunday refunding the deposits of the clients in limited amounts. NCL sources said the pressure of clients for sudden withdrawal of their deposits resulted in the crisis of the company.

Meanwhile, none of the abdicating Directors of the Bangladesh Commerce and Investment Ltd (BCI) was apprehended till Sunday.

Sources close to the BCI said that all the directors were in the city and some of them also maintained contacts with the officials of the company.

At present, the amount in deposits of different government organisations with the BCI has been estimated to be Taka 25 crore.

Sources said that the organisations included the University Grants Commission (UGC), National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTBB),

Power Development Board (PDB), Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Khulna Municipal Corporation, Khulna University, Waqf State, Khulna Cables, and the official liquidator of the High Court.

The deposits had been maintained violating government directives not to maintain accounts with any non-banking institution.

Bangladesh Bank in 1989 issued a circular to all government bodies not to maintain such accounts.

According to sources 15 directors of the BCI withdrew Taka 40 crore from the company on September 30, 1991. Moreover, the MD of the BCI, Mustafizur Rahman and his family members withdrew another 50 crore leading to the liquidity crisis in the company.

The breakdown of the amounts taken as loan by the directors is as follows: MG Quddus, Taka 5.26 crore, KM Habib Zaman, 5.04 crore, Saleh Ahmed Bhuiyan, 60.51 lakh, Abdul Jalil, 69.61 lakh, Farid Akhtar, 1.75 crore, Alhaj A. Matin, 51.17 lakh, Kazi Ashrafuldin, 9.02 crore, Mahbubur Rahman, 1.27 crore.

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Public notice on money found at Ershad's residence

By Staff Correspondent

The third Sub-Judge Court of Dhaka Sunday served a public notice for people willing to be parties in the case involving money recovered from the residence of deposed President H M Ershad.

The notice came out in a mass circulated vernacular daily, asking people to be party to the trial which begins May 7.

The former acting Secretary General of Jatiya Party A B M Shahjahan, filed the case at the court as plaintiff seeking decree of possession of Tk two crore on February 2 last year.

The money stashed in trunk at the residence of the deposed President was confiscated by a recovery committee of the government after the fall of Ershad regime.

Shahjahan, now the Joint Secretary General of Jatiya Party, told the Daily Star that he saw the court notice Sunday afternoon and would discuss with the Acting Chairman of the Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and present Secretary General Shah Moazzem today for party decision on appearance at the court.

Minister's chamber ransacked

By Special Correspondent

Five office chambers including that of Tarikul Islam, Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs in the Bangladesh Secretariat were found ransacked yesterday morning.

The incident was first noticed by the peon responsible to open the collapsible gate on the way to the ministry.

The other rooms belong to Enamul Huq, Secretary, Ministry of Women's Affairs, his private secretary, private secretary to the minister and assistant secretary (administration) of the Women Affairs Ministry.

To the surprise of many the alleged intruders did not steal any valuables like clocks, typewriters from these rooms. But, eyewitnesses said that all

papers and files in those rooms were scattered all over the floor and it seemed that the intruders were looking for some important documents or files.

Sources close to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs told The Daily Star that the way the intruders ransacked the rooms was surprising and that it became clear they were looking for some important papers. "But the ministry has no papers worth stealing" they quipped.

On receiving information a police team led by the SP of city Special Branch Suman Shahid visited the places of occurrence and had lengthy discussions with ministry officials.

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Modernise agriculture, PM urges scientists

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday called for increased research in the country's agricultural sector to evolve appropriate cropping patterns to maximise production.

Addressing the prize giving ceremony of the President's Award for Agricultural Development for the Bangla years 1995 and 1996 at the International Conference Centre, she also advocated for the modernisation and mechanisation of the country's farming system.

"Agriculture has to be updated... the age-old farming system is no more competent to cater to the needs of the increasing population," Begum Zia told the function.

Achieving stability in agriculture would have a positive impact on the overall economy

of the country, she pointed out referring to the agro-based economy of the country which contributes nearly half of the national production and employs three-fifths of the total manpower.

The President's Award for 1995 included two gold, seven silver and 51 bronze medals while for 1996 two gold, 10 silver and 75 bronze medals for outstanding performances in the field of agriculture. The award winners also received cash prizes, Taka 10,000 with the gold and Taka 5000 with the silver medals and certificates.

The President's Award for Agricultural Development was introduced in 1980 to accord national recognition and encourage the farming community.

17 paintings of Zainul Abedin stolen

Seventeen paintings of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin were stolen from 'Zainul Abedin Sangrahalaya' at Sahab Quarter area of Mymensingh town Saturday midnight.

Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh told UNB over telephone that about five armed miscreants trespassed the gallery at the dead of night and decamped with the paintings.

The thieves reportedly bound the gallery's guard with a rope during their operation.

A total of 70 paintings of the Shilpacharya were kept at the gallery at his hometown.

Farooq Sobhan new HC to India

Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan was Sunday officially named as the new High Commissioner to India, reports BSS.

A career diplomat, Sobhan earlier served as country's Ambassador to Malaysia and China.

He also served as Deputy Permanent Representative in the Bangladesh mission to the United Nations at New York when he acted as the Chairman of the 'G-77'.

Before becoming Additional Foreign Secretary in 1991, Sobhan served as Bangladesh envoy to China from August 1987 to October 1991 with concurrent accreditation to Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Democratic Kampuchea.

Born in 1940, Sobhan had his BA (Hons) from Dhaka University and MA from Oxford.

He joined the Foreign Service in 1964.

3 Left parties hold joint congress today

By Nurul Kabir

Three left-leaning political parties of the country will hold a joint congress today, for merging into a single party.

The parties are Workers Party of Bangladesh, United Communist League and Bangladesher Sammaybadi Dal. The joint congress to be held at the auditorium of the Engineers Institute Bangladesh is likely to give a call for a broader left unity.

According to sources, the new party to emerge through the joint conference will be named Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPPB).

Amal Sen of the Communist League and Rashed Khan Menon MP of the Workers Party are likely to be made President and Secretary General of the new party.

An 11-member standing committee — six from the Communist League, four from the Workers Party and one from the Sammaybadi Dal — would be formed at the congress as the policymaking body of the new party while a 90-member central committee would be constituted to run the party, sources said.

About five hundred delegates representing more than one hundred units of the parties are expected to attend the

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One more JP leader held

By Staff Correspondent

Kamrunnessa Nilu, a central leader of Jatiya Party was arrested from her Mohammadpur residence early Sunday and was brought on two-day police remand.

Mohammadpur Police arrested the JP leader from her residence at 2/8 Nurjahan Road at about 6 am and produced her before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

The court granted her two-day police remand for interrogation.

According to police Kamrunnessa Nilu was charged with anti-government activities.

Times-Bangla Trust being reconstituted

The Times-Bangla Trust is being reconstituted, it was learnt here last night, reports BSS.

As a result, an official source said, the non-official members of the Trustee Board will cease to function with immediate effect.

Dhaka keen to develop food security system

From M J Zahedi, Star Special Correspondent

KARACHI, May 3: Begum Khaleda Zia has said that her government gave priority to accelerated and sustainable economic development with focus on human resources development, participatory planning, women's participation and poverty alleviation.

She made these remarks in an interview with a Pakistani journalist whose report has been published today in the Lahore daily, The Nation.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister said that the core objective of the economic development programme of her government was to provide basic needs to the poor, with particular emphasis on food security (dal-bhaat).

This would be achieved, she said, by development of the

agricultural sector by at least 3.6 per cent per annum, increased expenditure on the social sector with focus on achieving universal primary education by 1995, development of the manufacturing sector at about nine per cent per annum, and development of social and physical infrastructure at a rate of over five per cent.

She added that decentralised participatory development would be encouraged in the case of local level planning to promote social empowerment, human resources development and mobilisation of local resources at the grassroots level.

Begum Zia said that women would be brought in the main-

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Sarawak will continue logging

From Chapol Bashar

KUALA LUMPUR, May 3: Despite pressure from Western environmentalists, Malaysia's biggest state Sarawak will stick to sustainable logging in its tropical rainforests.

However, the logging would be done on selective basis and it would be gradually reduced by 1995.

The logging policy of Sarawak was explained by State's Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud on Thursday. He was talking to a group of journalists from Asia-Pacific countries including Bangladesh in Sarawak's capital Kuching.

The Chief Minister countered Western environmentalists' anti-logging campaign against Malaysia and said that his country is committed to sustainable management of its forests and is taking steps to

conserve as much of its forests as possible.

Sarawak produces most of the Malaysia's tropical timber which is about 19 million cubic metres annually. Sarawak earns about 1360 million US dollars a year by exporting the timber.

For quite sometime, Malaysia has been facing severe criticism for its logging in Sarawak from some Western Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The NGOs termed the logging in Sarawak's tropical rainforest an act of deforestation causing harm to world environment. They say that Sarawak's tropical forests belong to the world.

The NGOs have also been campaigning for a boycott on the import of timber from Sarawak and a ban on the use of tropical timber.

There are about 10 resolutions against Sarawak pending in the US Congress and at least two resolutions against Sarawak's logging had been passed in the European Parliament.

The European Commission, however, had refused to implement the resolutions.

The Sarawak Government has already taken actions to counter the anti-logging campaigns.

Both the Central Government of Malaysia and the State Government of Sarawak have strengthened their efforts in this regard and waged a counter-campaign to protect their timber industry.

At the Kuching meeting with foreign journalists, the Sarawak Chief Minister said, "Western environmentalists, who feel that Sarawak's tropi-

cal rainforests belong to the world, should act responsibly by getting their facts right."

He said that if Sarawak's forests belong to the world, then the world should also act responsibly towards Malaysia.

The Chief Minister said that Sarawak had more reasons to look after its forests as it had to ensure the State would be able to derive revenue from its timber perpetually and provide employment for its people.

He told newsmen that poverty in Sarawak was removed drastically because the government could manage a systematic timber industry going.

The Chief Minister said the belief that Sarawak's system of selective felling of trees was destroying the environment was not true. It was in fact

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