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Inside Today

- Sport**
- Australian Captain Allan Border becomes the Highest Run Scorer in Test Cricket** Page 10
- Article**
- A new global giant to rule the south?** Page 4
- International**
- UN slams Myanmar junta for oppression of minorities** Page 5
- Business**
- Dhaka-Beijing accord to bring premier ports closer** Page 7
- Rising Stars**
- Sir Knobbly-knees in the Quest of Spookdom Castle, A Chilling Experience, People are Strange, Picture Quiz, My Life as a Wooden Pencil and Quiz Club** Page 8
- Metropolitan**
- Dhaka Day by Day**
- Mushroom Gaming Popularity but...** Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Clinton-Yeltsin meet in Canada likely

MOSCOW, Feb 26: Russian President Boris Yeltsin and US President Bill Clinton are likely to hold their April 4 summit in Canada, Interfax news agency said today. "A high-ranking source in the Foreign Ministry revealed this information to an Interfax correspondent," the agency said. The Foreign Ministry was not immediately available for comment, reports Reuters.

Kohl arrives in Japan

TOKYO, Feb 26: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl arrived in Japan today, on the fourth leg of his five-nation tour of Asia, for talks with Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa. During his four-day visit, Kohl is expected to urge Japan to offer Russia aid as a sign of support for its economic and democratic reforms, a topic due to be discussed at July's annual summit of the group of seven (G7) industrial nations, reports Reuters.

Sehri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
4	27	—	6.06 pm
5	28	5.00 am	6.06 pm

CIA director says India wants to develop hydrogen bomb

WASHINGTON, Feb 26: CIA director James Woolsey, answering a question before the John Glenn Committee of the Senate, has expressed the view that India is interested in developing the hydrogen bomb, and that India's progress in space launches is 'troubling' to the United States, reports PTI.

The senate committee chairman John Glenn said, 'almost four years ago, one of your predecessors, Judge Webster, testified before this committee that the intelligence committee had indications that tell US that India is interested in ther-

monuclear weapons capability. Do you share that assessment? Is that still valid today? And what are the indicators?'

Woolsey replied, 'I believe Judge Webster's comment is, unfortunately, still valid. India's Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has shown an interest in materials that are necessary for the development of thermonuclear as distinct from just nuclear weapons.

BARC is India's leading institution for nuclear research and development, and it designed and produced the device for the 1974 test.

'10 Soviet N-sub met accidents during Cold War'

MOSCOW, Feb 26: At least 10 Soviet nuclear submarines suffered serious reactor accidents during the Cold War, the environmental group Greenpeace said in a report released Friday, reports AP.

"With at least eight sinkings or reactor meltdowns, Soviet nuclear submarines were at times as much a threat to Soviet sailors and to the

Clinton orders food aid for Bosnians

WASHINGTON, Feb 26: President Bill Clinton today signed an executive order authorising the US military to carry out parachute drops of food and medicine into Bosnia, the Defence Department said, reports Reuters.

"The President signed the order this morning," said army major Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman.

Other Defence officials, who asked not to be identified, said the dropping of hundreds of thousands of leaflets into Bosnia could begin as early as Friday night to inform people that humanitarian aid was on the way.

Clinton announced on Thursday that he had decided to order unarmed US air force cargo planes to drop food, medicine and other relief supplies into Bosnia.

Chittagong turns into smugglers' paradise

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: Country's major port city, Chittagong, has now turned into a paradise of smugglers because of its vulnerability to influx of contraband foreign goods through air, land and sea routes, informed sources said.

According to sources, hardly any day or night passes without the entry of large consignments of contraband items, particularly Indian textile products, drugs and other foreign goods including costly cigarettes, electronic goods and gold.

The flow of smuggled goods mainly gold and Indian-made sarees and other clothes, rose with the advent of the month of Ramzan, market sources said.

As a result, most of the city markets here including Mini

Democratic Forum fails to form preparatory body for convention

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Democratic Forum has failed to form of a preparatory committee for its planned grand convention in May because of the poor response from political quarter.

However, a Forum meeting, convened to constitute the committee, decided yesterday that the body would be formed and announced by March 15.

The meeting held at the Baily Road residence of Dr. Kamal Hossain, convenor of the organisation, further decided that unless the preparatory body was formed, the steering committee of the Forum would perform the preparatory committee's duties, a press statement released after yesterday's meeting.



A keeper patting a rhino yearling, one of the two, gifted by Nepal to the Mirpur Zoo in Dhaka. — Star photo

Rhinos drawing more visitors in Mirpur Zoo

by Sharier Khan

Children and their parents are thronging the Dhaka Zoo in Mirpur to see its two new little but heavy-weight guests — a rhino couple.

The rhinos, one eight months old male and the other a six months old female arrived at the zoo on February 14 as a gift from Nepal.

The zoo authority has put them near the elephant shelter in the zoo but the couple is being separated by a wall.

"The rhinos were captured from two different forests in Nepal," the Dhaka Zoo curator informed, "they do not know each other. Which means they may fight a bloody battle at the first meeting."

The herbivorous creatures, although fierce in nature, have been calm and friendly so far, the curator observed.

"They do not mind to be touched by human beings," he added.

Diarrhoea claims 840 lives in two months

By Staff Correspondent

Diarrhoea epidemic has claimed some 840 lives in less than two months in seven southern districts, while the disease spread to the capital and nearby Narayanganj district, health officials said Friday.

The figure included two more deaths on Thursday in Pirojpur, four each in Bhola and Khulna, and one each in Patuakhali and Jhalokathi on the same day when 480 people were hospitalised in different hospitals in the capital, an official of the DG (Health) Control Room said.

The highest number of 237 deaths were reported from Pirojpur district followed by Barguna 163, Bagerhat 136, Patuakhali 126, Jhalokathi 62, Bhola 61, and Khulna 54, since the disease broke out in January, the official said.

The unofficial death figure is much higher than the official record.

Hasina protests dismissal of Waliur, Mohiuddin

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday protested dismissal of Bangladesh Ambassador in Italy Waliur Rahman and acting permanent representative in the United Nations Mohiuddin Ahmed, reports UNB.

In a statement, she said the freedom fighters who are in the service in Bangladesh foreign missions are being sacked while killers of Bangabandhu — Mohiuddin, Major Nur Chowdhury and Major Shariful Islam Dalim — were elevated to the post of ambassadors by the present government.

Hasina said the anti-liberation Jamaat-Shibir elements have raised their ugly heads because of anti-liberation character of ruling BNP.

She said freedom fighters of 1971 Liberation War are being neglected while Rajakars and Al-badrs were rewarded. It was Ziaur Rahman who rehabilitated Jamaat-Shibir, Rajakar-Albadr politically and Begum Zia is patronising these civil forces following the footprints of her husband.

Angry BJP MPs disrupt Parliament session

NEW DELHI, Feb 26: Angry members of a Hindu nationalist party disrupted Parliament Friday to condemn a massive police crackdown that thwarted their anti-government rally in the capital, reports AP.

Firing tear gas and water cannons, riot police prevented tens of thousands of Hindu nationalists from assembling near Parliament Thursday to hold the rally, called by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

At least 88 people were injured and more than 2,800 people were arrested. Most of them were released later without charges being filed.

"What New Delhi witnessed yesterday was the most exceptional assault on the citizens of the state," Jaswant Singh, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party told reporters.

"We cannot be cowed down by sticks and bullets," said Atal Behari Vajpayee, another senior party leader.

Thousands of armed policemen who had taken over the streets returned to their barracks on Friday, and the

Zairean troops lift siege of parliament

KINSHASA, Feb 26: Zairean troops today lifted a three-day siege of their country's interim parliament, saying legislators now understood soldiers' pay grievances, reports Reuters.

Witnesses said armoured vehicles and infantry left the makeshift parliament building where they had imprisoned some 1000 legislators and staff in a row over banknotes, and politicians emerged to cheer from civilian onlookers.

UNITA's absence delays Angolan peace talks

LUANDA, Feb 26: Angolan peace talks due to start in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital today, were delayed by the non-arrival of the rebel UNITA delegation, and Angolan government spokesman said, reports Reuters.

The meeting has not yet begun because UNITA has not arrived," General Higinio Carneiro, spokesman for the government delegation, said on Angolan state-run radio.

Split in CPB looks inevitable

By Staff Correspondent

The split in the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) looks inevitable as the hardliners took a firm stand in favour of communism Friday at the opening day of the three-day Central Committee meeting, party sources said.

The Central Committee has no right to dissolve the party, the communists (in Bangladesh) will remain as communist," Mujahidul Islam Selim, a hardliner, told the committee members. He said "we still believe that communism has relevance to human welfare." But his opponents said, "It is irrelevant in the world perspective as well as in Bangladesh."

Earlier, Selim submitted a written statement signed by 12 other members of his side.

Fifty-four of the 75-member Central Committee were present at the first day of the meeting.

Ajoy Roy, Shamsuddoha, Dr Sarwar Ali and Shekhar Datta spoke in favour of their stand on the issue while Nurul Islam Nahid submitted his report as the General Secretary. The

BCU denies relation with CPB

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) Friday said the organisation had no connection with the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB).

"It is not a front organisation of any political party, a BCU press release said.

Referring to a report published in The Daily Star on Friday, Ruhin Hossain Prince and Sajjad Zahir, President and General Secretary respectively said in a statement that "BCU is an independent student organisation."

As it was not a front organisation of any political party, so the question of holding demonstration during the central committee meeting of the CPB, does not arise, the statement said.

The BCU leaders urged to refrain from publishing such reports.

Acute liquidity crisis cripples industries

By Inam Ahmed and Sohel Manzur

Acute liquidity crisis, labour unrest and under-utilisation of production capacity have been identified by the BJMC officials and entrepreneurs of jute sector as the major problems of the yarn and jute goods producing mills of the country.

They also viewed that lack of adequate government patronisation in terms of incentives and financial facilities further aggravated the problems.

They said the problems were mainly causing undesirable increase in the cost of production of jute goods allowing other jute exporting countries to capture the international market.

Frequent power disruption, excess manpower, fixation of minimum wages for the labour, high bank interest rate, lack of expertise and poor local consumption of jute goods are the other problems that hit the

Kim names 3 teachers as ROK ministers

SEOUL, Feb 26: President Kim Young-sam in a surprise move today named three university professors to serve as South Korea's Unification Board Minister, Foreign Minister and National Intelligence Chief, a spokesman said, reports AFP.

Han Wan-sang, a Seoul National University Professor, was named Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the National Unification Board, while Han Song-joo, a Korea University Political Science Professor, was named Foreign Minister.

Kim Deuk, a Professor at Korea Foreign Language School, was named to head the National Security Planning Agency. The National Intelligence Agency Kim has promised to reform.

Jhenidah civil surgeon office ransacked

JHENIDAH, Feb 26: Health service examination candidates ransacked the Civil Surgeon office here today and blocked the Jhenidah-Jessore road protesting the shifting of their examination date, reports UNB.

The examination scheduled for today was declared postponed by the authorities on Thursday through miking without prior notification. The date for the test for 24 vacant posts was earlier deferred from February 19.

Crisis in jute sector-III

Witnesses said about 900 candidates, who came to the town from across the country to compete for 24 vacant posts, went berserk at the sudden announcement, ransacked the Civil Surgeon office and blocked the road for about an hour.

Deputy Commissioner of the district rushed to the spot and appeased the unruly candidates assuring them of early holding of the competitive test.

Crisis in jute sector-III

mills out of the total 25,864 are remaining idle because of the fall in demand. The World Bank has already told the government to close down 13 jute mills out of the total 64, so that the remaining units could utilise their maximum capacity to meet the reduced demand.

Officials at BJMC (Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation), however, termed the WB

Crisis in jute sector-III

mid 60s which reduced to 9 lakh ton at present. The capacity of the country's jute mills is, however, 8 lakh ton, including 5 lakh ton of the BJMC mills.

"Liquidity crisis makes a jute mill non-viable in many ways", commenting this BJMA General Secretary Momenur Rahman said the entrepreneurs could not purchase raw

Crisis in jute sector-III

jute in time and in low price because of the crisis. The BMRE (Balancing, Modernising, Rehabilitation and Expansion) of the mills also hits snag often because of the same crisis resulting in lower production capacity of the mills, he said, adding that if there was no such crisis the entrepreneurs could try to improve the quality of their products to face the competitive international market.

"If I had no liquidity crisis in running my own mill, I would set up a mini power plant to face loadshedding. Momenur Rahman said describing power disruption as one of the vital problem for the industrial sector.

One of the major problems facing the spinning mills is the delay in disbursing subsidy, which has been granted the