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VOL. III NO. 53 REGD. NO. DA 781 FALGOON 25, 1399 BS, DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 9, 1993 RAMADAN 14, 1413 HIJRI 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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Move to avoid shutdown Govt opens talks with labour leaders today

By Nazmul Ashraf

In a frantic move to ward off the March 15-16 shutdown, announced by the Industrial workers, the government has decided to open talks with the labour leaders today, authoritative government sources said.

Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and State Minister for Textiles Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan will sit in separate sessions with the leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) and four bodies of jute-textile-cotton-sugar mills workers, the sources said.

The trade union leaders also confirmed the proposed meetings.

Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan is scheduled to meet the textile-cotton mills trade union leaders today while Hannan

Shah and Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan are due to hold talks with the SKOP and jute mills workers' leaders respectively tomorrow.

Both the Jute Minister and the Labour Minister have respectively invited the Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad and the SKOP to the planned talks through separate letters to them.

Hannan Shah, who spoke by phone, said last night that he would meet the jute mills leaders at 4 pm tomorrow at the BJMC Bhaban.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, reached by telephone last night, told The Daily Star that he had sought a meeting with the SKOP leaders at 10.30 am tomorrow.

The time and venue of Textile Minister's meeting could not be known as he could not be contacted until last night.

The three ministers' moves came at the directive of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, official sources said hinting that she herself might meet the agitating leaders if her cabinet colleagues fail to bear fruits.

The government signed separate accords with the SKOP and the jute-textile-cotton mills workers' leaders, agreeing to among other issues, fixing minimum wages for the public and private sector workers, stopping denationalisation process and re-employment of workers and employees.

The nationwide 48-hour shutdown was separately announced March 2 by the Sramik Karmachari Oikya

AJM incurs Tk 25 lakh loss a day

Adamjee Jute Mills is incurring a loss of Tk 25 lakh everyday although its production made a remarkable increase in recent times, reports UNB.

Its daily production rose to 237 metric tons against its usual everyday production of 127 metric tons in July 1992.

M A Latif, Executive Director of Adamjee Jute Mills, at a press conference yesterday said that the mills which made a loss of about Taka

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Jute spinners demand 'export incentive'

Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association yesterday demanded introduction of 'export incentive' or cent per cent convertibility of currency in the jute export in the overall interest of improving the country's export, reports BSS.

President of the Jute Spinners Association M Mahmud made the demand at the 14th

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Diarrhoea epidemic to spread further, warns ICDDR,B

Diarrhoea which has taken an epidemic form in the country will spread further, cautioned ICDDR,B (International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh) Monday, reports UNB.

"There is good reason to believe that the epidemic will continue to spread and that the number of people affected will continue to rise," said a press release of ICDDR,B.

Health Control Room said at least 4 more people died out of 783 attacked by the disease in 13 districts during the 24 hours ending 9:00 am Monday.

According to ICDDR,B this epidemic of diarrhoea is being caused by a type of bacteria which has never before been known to cause epidemics.

It is very similar to the bacteria that usually causes cholera and the symptoms that it produces and treatment it responds to are identical to those of cholera, it added.

ICDDR,B advised that those affected by the disease should immediately proceed to hospital or diarrhoea treatment centre.

It said spread of the disease is facilitated by faecal-oral transmission.

"One should drink only clean water, preferably boiled water, and wash both hands with water and soap, soil or ash before eating or preparing food and after defecation."

ICDDR,B further said food should be well cooked and eaten hot when possible. Bacteria which causes diarrhoea may be present in the feces of people without diarrhoea themselves.

"It is important to take care to eat or drink only clean food and water even when no one in the family or neighbourhood is affected by diarrhoea," ICDDR,B said.

According to official sources, the disease killed more than 5,000 people out of

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Cabinet okays areas of PDB, REB, DESA

The cabinet has approved the proposal for earmarking the responsibility for power distribution arrangement and fixed the geographical areas of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA), reports BSS.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources placed the proposal before the cabinet.

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Iftar 5 minutes after sun-set

The iftar time has been fixed by the Islamic Foundation five minutes after the sun-set in consultation with the Ulama and Mufti so that 'Roza' (fasting) does not get spoilt out of confusion of timing, State Minister for Religious Affairs, Prof Abdul Mannan told Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Making a statement the State Minister said the iftar timing has been calculated as

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Nari Adhikar Sangatha, a women's rights organisation, organised a rally in city yesterday on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

Matin's remark brings JS to near pandemonium

By Staff Correspondent

The first opposition to the Ministers remark, however, came from Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali who was presiding.

An annoyed Speaker asked the Home Minister, "How do you know that the JP leader would not get relieved of the charges in the concerned court?" "Let the court decide on the charges by the government against the JP leader," the Speaker added.

Some of the Home Minister's cabinet colleagues were also seen supporting the Speaker's view nodding their heads.

The Home Minister then withdrew his remark and hastened to add that the JP leader would be tried by the court as per the law of the land.

Although the Speaker's observation about the Home Minister's comment and the minister's withdrawal of the remark contributed a lot to pacifying the Opposition benches.

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50 houses gutted in Islamnagar

By Staff Correspondent

At least 50 thatched houses were gutted in a fire at Islamnagar on the outskirts of the capital Monday noon.

Originating from a kitchen the fire immediately engulfed the area and continued burning for around one and a half hours, witnesses said.

Firemen could not reach the spot as their vehicles could not cross the river Buriganga in the absence of ferry service, nearby villagers said.

However, local people brought the fire under control, witnesses said. Total estimate of loss in the fire could not be ascertained immediately.

Armedmen loot Taka 3 lakh, shoot at four

By DMCH Correspondent

An armed gang looted Taka three lakh from a furniture shop at Kauran bazar and left four persons injured Monday afternoon.

Immediately after the incident Tejgaon police raided the area and arrested eight people in this connection, police said.

The gang stormed into the Modern Furniture shop at 22/1, Kauran Bazar and decamped with Taka three lakh at around 3 pm yesterday. While escaping the armedmen opened fire and exploded crackers leaving four persons injured on the spot, witnesses said.

The injured, Aurangozeb Sani, owner of the shop, Waliullah, manager of the shop and two others — Abdus Salam and Delwar Hossain were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

NEWS BRIEFS

- PM donates bus for JU students**
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia donated a bus for the students of Jahangirnagar University at her office here yesterday. Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Professor Kazi Saleh Ahmed and leaders of Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (JUCSU) received the bus, reports BSS.
- PM hosts iftar for diplomats**
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia hosted an iftar party here yesterday evening in honour of the diplomats and representatives of different missions and UN agencies in Dhaka. Visiting UNFPA Executive Director Dr Nafis Sadiq was among others present at the party.
- Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman were also present, reports BSS.**
- Hasina takes iftar with teachers**
Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday hosted an iftar party at her Minto Road residence in honour of teachers of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar and Engineering Universities. More than 500 teachers attended the iftar, reports UNB.
- Two killed in road mishaps**
BOGRA, Mar 8: A minor girl and an elderly woman were killed in road accidents at Mirzapur in Sherpur thana on Bogra-Nagarbari highway today (Monday), witnesses and police said. The victims were identified as Anzu Khatun (8) and Chhabitan Beowa (60) of Mirzapur, reports UNB.
- 12 die in stampede in India**
NEW DELHI, Mar 8: Twelve people were crushed to death and 35 were injured in a stampede of thousands of pilgrims Monday who were trying to reach a holy stream to wash away their sins, reports AP.

UN members must be ready to send troops : Ghali Bosnian army commander pulls out of talks, orders attack

TUZLA (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Mar 8: Bosnia's army commander on Monday pulled out of truce talks and ordered his troops to free thousands of civilians from a Serb siege in eastern Bosnia, reports AP.

At the same time, international aid officials appealed for emergency aid to the wounded and sick in the government-held enclave of Srebrenica.

The order to attack by commander Sefer Halilovic of Bosnian government forces appeared to end a unilateral cease-fire government forces declared several weeks ago.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic backed the offensive in remarks to reporters in Sarajevo. "Any measure to protect these people from slaughter is a legitimate measure," he said.

He said government-held towns in the area were in danger because of shortages of food and ammunition.

Bosnian Serb military sources reported attacks by government forces in several areas of eastern Bosnia, but said they beat them back. Sadik Hajdarevic, a spokesman for Konjetic Polje, one of the besieged enclaves, reported heavy shelling there.

His report was received by Ham radio operators in Zagreb, Croatia.

The new fighting in the east was accompanied by an upsurge of sniper fire and shelling around Sarajevo. It followed what the Serbs said was an offer by Muslim commanders of the besieged Cerska and Zepa enclaves to surrender to attacking Serb forces.

Naser Oric, the commander in Srebrenica, informed Halilovic the Cerska and Zepa commanders intended to surrender and said he would do the same if he did not get ammunition "in time," the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA, quoted by Belgrade-based Tanjug, reported.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Sunday a failure of the warring factions to accept a peace accord might mean UN members would have to "send troops on the ground" to try to force a settlement. But there were no signs the United States or other major powers were inclined to commit troops.

"We have as an objective the withdrawal of the Serbs, and if they will not withdraw then we'll have to take the necessary measures," Boutros-Ghali said on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," in Washington.

Asked what those measures might be, Boutros-Ghali said that if the Serbs defy international pressure to pull back, "there is only one solution, which is enforcement. And again, the members... must be ready to send troops on the ground."

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Women's Day: Call to remove discrimination

International Women's Day was observed in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world yesterday with a call for removing gender discrimination in the present day world to facilitate the womenfolk to work at par with their male counterparts in building the society, reports BSS.

Various socio-cultural, political and voluntary organisations chalked out elaborate programmes in the city to observe the day with due enthusiasm and importance.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in separate messages on the eve of the day called for promoting the rights of the women community.

In the capital, the International Women's Day celebration committee brought out a procession which paraded the main city streets with banners and leaflets. It demanded a thorough recast in the country's existing judicial system to establish rights, honour

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Rockets hit Kabul as Hekmatyar takes over

ISLAMABAD, Mar 8: Radical Afghan leader Oulbuddin Hekmatyar formally accepted the post of Prime Minister today and President Burhanuddin Rabbani said the two arch enemies had resolved to start afresh, reports Reuter.

But rockets slammed into the western suburbs of Kabul just hours after the warring Afghan leaders signed a peace accord in Islamabad to end months of fierce fighting in the city, killing three people and injuring 25.

The government blamed the minority Shite Hezb-i-Wahdat Party. Hezb-i-Wahdat said the government fired first. Thousands of people have died in battles for power since the Mujahideen overthrew the former communist government last April.

The executive committee of Hekmatyar's hardline Mawerick Hezb-i-Islami Party in Islamabad unanimously asked the 44-year-old leader to take up the post of Prime Minister, allocated to the party under Sunday's peace accord.

All parties were sincere, Hekmatyar said before the eight rival leaders, allies in the 14-year Afghan insurgency, flew to Saudi Arabia to offer special prayers of thanks at Mecca.

"I hope they are afraid of Allah, and for the sake of the innocent people of Afghanistan they will forgive their past and remain committed to what they have agreed," a Kabul shopkeeper said.

"No Afghan group or leader would oppose this accord," Hekmatyar told reporters.

"We are resolved to open a new page of relations with Hezb-i-Islami," the fundamentalist Rabbani said in an interview in Islamabad. "We will concentrate on closer cooperation."

Hekmatyar had accused Rabbani, 53, of rigging his election last December and subjected Kabul to a fierce bombardment in January and February to back his demand that Rabbani step down. More than 1,000 people were killed and 6,000 injured.

Mizan Chowdhury granted bail

By Court Correspondent

Senior Vice-President of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, MP, was granted bail by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, Monday.

An Assistant Commissioner of Police, Uttara, Ruhul Amin lodged a case against Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and the party's International Affairs Secretary Nurul Islam Milon Sunday under Section 505 of Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC) for being prejudicial to the maintenance of friendly relations of Bangladesh with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Tk 26 cr UNHCR grant for Rohingyas

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees will provide about Tk 26 crore to Bangladesh government for maintenance of the Myanmar refugees in the current year, reports UNB.

Relief Secretary MA Hakim and the Mission Head of UNCHR, Darius Byandar, signed an agreement yesterday to this effect.

The grant, which will be utilised in 1993, is the second instalment from the UNHCR commitment.

Erosion in Sandwip spares none

By Inam Ahmed back from Sandwip

The sea and the wind have not even let the dead of the 1991 cyclone rest in peace in the island of Sandwip. They have now again become victims of an unabated erosion.

When the catastrophic cyclone hit the big island on the fateful night of April 29, the main victims were those living near the sea and the rootless people whose homes had already been devoured by it. They too buried their dear ones beside the sea.

But in the span of two years, the erosion in Sandwip has taken a serious turn and much of the shores have been washed away into the sea. With the land, the sea has also washed away the graves.

Walking along the shores of Sandwip today, one often

1984. Since then erosion has continued unabated, shrinking it further.

In last year's erosion alone, the sea has taken away the old Court House, the Momena

Life in Sandwip-I

comes across graves, half washed away by the sea, and pieces of skeletons strewn around.

Sandwip which had an area of 417 square miles in 1780, had been reduced by erosion to only 92 square miles by

Sekandar Girls High School, a colony of the school and many other houses. A single room of the Court House still remains standing, heaped with court documents soaked with the salty sea water.

Local people said that each year, over 300 meters of land get washed away in the erosion.

Braja Hari, a farmer turned fisherman, while talking to this correspondent at the Jahaz Ghat (port) area of Sandwip pointed his finger at the sea and said that there was his 'Beta' homestead. "But that's now all a legend," Hari said gloomily looking much older than his 55-years of age. "The sea gulped everything in the 60s and from then on I am no longer a farmer, but a fish-

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Accords with WB on 3 power projects likely

By Sharier Khan

A World Bank (WB) team is likely to arrive Dhaka at the end of this month to sign agreements on funds for three projects in the power sector worth US 136 million dollar.

This comes following the withdrawal of suspension on credit to the power sector.

The signing of these agreements was supposed to take place some one and a half years ago. They were withheld as the WB stopped fund disbursement to the power sector complaining about the Power

Development Board's (PDB) failure to overcome its systems loss. The systems loss was over 40 per cent.

According to sources, in the absence of the WB fund for one and a half years, the Bangladesh government sanctioned Tk 210 crore for the power sector for '92-'93 and Tk 42 crore in '91-'92. Only Tk 18 crore of the sanction was spent by the PDB.

With the withdrawal of the suspension, the WB would now

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Sheri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Mar	Sheri	Iftar
14	9	—	6:12 pm
15	10	4:53 am	6:12 pm