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NOTICE

Our regular item Dhaka Day by Day is being held over for tomorrow due to space constraint. We regret the inconvenience caused to our valued readers.

NEWS BRIEFS

Taka devalued

Taka has been devalued by 80 paise against the US dollar. The revised exchange rate is Tk 39.80 for one dollar, effective from yesterday (April 24). Till Friday, the exchange rate was Tk 39, reports UNB.

Saifur off to Paris

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman left for Paris yesterday morning leading an 11 member Bangladesh delegation to the 20th meeting of the Bangladesh Aid Group to be held on April 27-28 in Paris. The Aid Group meeting will be preceded by a meeting with the World Bank on April 26. The Finance Minister will return home on April 30.

Rafiqul leaves for Kenya

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia left for Nairobi, Kenya, last night to attend the fourteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements at the invitation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The session will be held from April 26 to May 5, reports UNB.

Jamaat MPs hail court verdict

A meeting of the Parliamentary Party of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh was held yesterday at the party's central office with leader of the parliamentary group Maulana Muttar Rahman Nizami in the chair. The Jamaat parliamentarians welcomed the verdict of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court restoring citizenship of Jamaat chief Prof Golam Azam, reports BSS.

Cox's Bazar soon

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 24: The government has planned to set up a cultural complex at Cox's Bazar. This was stated by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanaara Begum while addressing a meeting at the local circuit house Thursday, reports BSS.

Police teargas supporters as Sharif arrives in Karachi Mazari dismisses ultimatum for dissolution of PAs

LAHORE, Apr 24: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Balakh Sher Mazari differed openly today with his coalition partners, dismissing their ultimatum for dissolution of provincial parliaments, reports Reuters.

"Why should they be dissolved, you tell me," he asked reporters in the Punjab province capital of Lahore.

Former opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, whose Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) is a major partner in Mazari's week-old coalition, has threatened to pull out unless elections are called for the four provincial assemblies.

Mazari, a dissident from

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party, said no grounds existed for dissolving the provincial assemblies in Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier.

KARACHI, Apr 24: Police guarding the Chief Minister of Pakistan's southern province of Sind opened fire on a crowd surrounding his car today, wounding four or five people, witnesses said. Crowds waiting for Sharif stopped the car of their minister Muzaffar Hussain Shah as he drove into the city from the airport and demanded to talk to him, reports Reuters.

"There is no justification to dissolve them if they are working in accordance with the constitution and law," he said.

Bhutto insists on new elections for all assemblies, saying

they were formed after elections that she says were rigged in November 1990, two months after Ishaq Khan dismissed her government.

Fair and impartial elections

term government is apparently reluctant to see a dissolution of the provincial assemblies where they hold majorities.

In Karachi, police lobbed dozens of tear gas shells Saturday into a crowd of several thousand demonstrators protesting the ouster of Sharif's pro-business government.

Eyewitnesses said the army was deployed after demonstrators stormed barricades and swarmed into a giant white marble mausoleum, where Sharif was to speak. No injuries were immediately reported.

See Page 12 Col 1

5.11pc GDP growth in FY 93 likely

Star Report

Bangladesh will enjoy an accelerated rate of growth in GDP of 5.11 per cent in the current fiscal 1992-93 (FY 93), compared to 3.91 per cent in the last fiscal 1991-92 (FY 92), forecast Bangladesh Planning Commission.

According to the Planning Commission's forecast, based on the first nine months (July-March) performance of the economy, the growth rate in agriculture sector is expected to be 4.0 per cent in FY 93 as against 2.43 per cent in the previous period mainly because of higher aman production and expected good weather conditions benefiting other crops during the current fiscal.

But the World Bank, key co-ordinating donor agency argues that the Planning Commission's forecast is on

the high side.
The Planning Commission's forecast, to be presented in the forthcoming Bangladesh aid group meeting scheduled to begin in Paris on April 27, gives a growth rate of 8.58 per cent in the industrial sector in FY 93 compared 7.68 per cent in FY 92.

The growth rate in public services is expected to rise to 10.07 per cent in FY 93 as against 6.53 per cent in FY 92.

The forecast for FY 93 on the basis of trends observed so far are encouraging compared to the FY 92 benchmark, says the memorandum for Bangladesh aid group meeting prepared jointly by the Planning Commission and Economic Relations Division.

The memorandum to be See Page 12 Col 4

Another grid failure

By Staff Correspondent

The capital plunged into total darkness after part of the national grid failed due to technical faults Saturday evening, official sources said.

There were faults either in the Ghorashal 230 kv power plant or in between the Ghorashal-Tongi line, one official said adding that only the capital and its adjoining areas had been affected by the disruption.

The authorities formed a four-member committee headed by the Chief Engineer (Transmission) Sarwar Hossain to find out the exact cause of the failure.

One official of the Power Development Board told The Daily Star that supply tripped at 6-16 pm and that the restoration work started phase-wise after 32 minutes.

The other parts of the country were not affected, he See Page 12 Col 2



Nirmul Samannaya Committee discussing plans to make its today's sit-in programme a success at Taher Auditorium in city yesterday. — Star photo

Nirmul body sit-in today

By Staff Correspondent

The Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Samannaya Committee with the full support of the Awami League-led 11 opposition political parties is scheduled to state a sit-in demonstration around the Secretariat today.

The three and half-hour sit-in, due to begin at 11 am, has been planned to press the government to execute the death sentence on war criminal Golam Azam. A People's Court, sponsored by the Samannaya Committee, last year proclaimed that Azam should get the death penalty for his crimes during the

Liberation War.

The sit-in programme has meantime been backed by the AL and its pro-Liberation political allies — the Five-Party combine, the four-party Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) and the Gonotantri Party.

Leaders and workers of these parties have decided to participate in the sit-in. However, the government has banned rallies, processions and other public gatherings around the secretariat. The 24-hour restriction came into effect midnight last night.

Leaders of the Samannaya Committee and its supporting parties discussed their preparations and participation in the sit-in at separate meetings and also exchanged views among themselves yesterday.

All these leaders also met jointly with AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Minto Road official residence Friday night to call for massive participation in the programme and to warn the government against any attempt to obstruct the protest. See Page 12 Col 1

Joint meeting discusses strategies today

By Nurul Kabir

A joint meeting of the political parties supporting the Nirmul Committee movement for trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal would be held this afternoon to discuss concrete programmes and strategies of a united movement against the government.

The united movement against the government was jointly planned by the leaders of the Awami League (AL), the Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) and the Gonotantri Party (GP) last Friday.

According to the consensus reached by the leaders Friday, the government has been showing indifference to the democratic aspiration of the people, denying the constitutional rights of the citizens and clearly taking the side of the political forces who opposed the nation's War of Independence in 1971.

The Friday meeting felt that the parties willing to launch a democratic movement should decide the possible programmes and strategies for the planned movement separately before the leaders jointly meet again this afternoon.

According to the decision of the Friday's joint meeting different political parties and alliances had their separate meetings yesterday.

The AL held a six hour joint meeting of the party's Central Working Committee members See Page 12 Col 7

Find ways to fight terrorism : PM Sending children abroad for studies no remedy

Prime Minister Begum

Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all including teachers, guardians and leaders of political parties to extend cooperation in eradicating terrorism from educational institutions, reports UNB.

"Government alone cannot fight the menace which may assume a terrifying dimension," she said, assuring all support to the teachers and guardians in their any decision to contain campus terrorism.

Begum Zia was speaking at a meeting with teachers and guardians of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) at the International Conference Centre yesterday

morning.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan, DU VC Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, JU VC Prof Kazi Saheb Ahmed, BUET VC Mohammad Shahjahan, National Guardians Association President Dr AMA Zaman and General Secretary Emdadul Huq also took part in the discussion aimed at finding ways and means of mopping up terrorism from educational institutions.

"Terrorism has stirred everyone," the Prime Minister said, suggesting continued discussion for working out a lasting solution to the problem. "An overall review is necessary." See Page 12 Col 4

4 killed as BDR, people clash in Naogaon, says Press Note

Four persons were killed

and several others injured in an unfortunate clash between the local people and the members of BDR on duty at Kolarhat under Badalgachi Thana of Naogaon District on April 23 (Friday), according to a press note issued by Ministry of Home Affairs here yesterday, reports BSS.

Sixteen BDR personnel were also injured during the clash.

The government has formed a one man enquiry commission with a retired judge of Bangladesh High Court Division Justice Abdul Matin Khan Chowdhury to inquire into the incident, the press note added.

C&F agents may withdraw strike today

By Staff Correspondent

The strike by the Customs clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) is expected to be withdrawn today (Sunday) after a formal agreement with the authorities.

A meeting Saturday between the authorities and the agents' federation successfully ironed out differences and finalised the agreement to be signed Sunday before the announcement of the strike withdrawal, according to a source who attended the meetings.

Under the terms and conditions See Page 12 Col 6

Padma level rises, so does farmers' agitation

By Asiuzzaman, back from Kushtia

Water level in the once-mighty river Padma has begun to increase since last week as has the agitation by farmers who have missed the cropping season, local farmers and officials said.

The water level, below 13 ft early this month, increased to 14 ft, the minimum requirement to turn on the pumps of the GK-Project, but that would now be of little use to the farmers.

"The rise of the water level late in the season adds insult to the injury of the farmers," one official at the Bheramara pump house told The Daily Star

Khairip-1 season covering a 1,20,000-acre area under the project command has lapsed causing an estimated loss of Taka 100 crore in terms of agriculture.

It has been for the first time since 1960, that the project had failed to supply water in the project areas forcing the farmers to organise protest rallies and demonstrations demanding water.

The total command area in the project was of 3,50,000 acres in Kushtia, Jhenidah, Magura and Chuadanga regions to be covered during the Khairip-2 season beginning June.

Project officials monitoring the rainfall trend forecast that they would be able to supply water during the second season.

Most of the farmers in the region know that the present situation is the outcome of the Farakka dam that controls the Ganges waters for navigability of the Calcutta Port on Hooghly River.

"We are agitating here against India who has deprived us of our share of water, but we know it has little impact on the big neighbour," Sajidur Hossain, who has three acres of land in the project See Page 12 Col 3

Ctg police seal off offices of Akhtaruzzaman

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 24: Police today raided and sealed off the factories and offices of businesses owned by Akhtaruzzaman Babu, MP, allegedly involved in the murder of Humayun Zahir in the capital.

Meanwhile rumour spread in and around the port city that the accused had gone into hiding in the town. But no confirmation could be made and police officials also denied having any knowledge about his whereabouts.

In the raids on Friday and today, police sealed off the factories of Afif Steel Industries, Rony Chemicals and other offices of the Awami League leader.

Indian boeing with 141 hijacked

AMRITSAR, Apr 24: A lone hijacker who said he was a Muslim Kashmiri militant seized an Indian airliner with 141 people on board today and demanded to be flown to Kabul, an airline spokesman said, reports Reuters.

He threatened to kill passengers one by one unless his demand was met and gave negotiators just 25 minutes to agree.

But he was still talking after the deadline passed, the spokesman for state-owned Indian Airlines said.

The Boeing 737, carrying 135 passengers, including nine infants, and six crew, was

parked on the single runway at Amritsar Airport and the hijacker refused to allow it to be moved, pilots of the airline said.

A large group of elite paramilitary "Blackcat" commandos, who are specially trained in storming places, was at the airport, witnesses said.

The hijacker gave his name as Syed Jallaluddin and said he was a senior member of the Hizbul Mujahideen group fighting to join India-ruled Kashmir to the one-third of the Himalayan territory ruled by Pakistan. Hizbul disowned

him.
The plane was on a scheduled flight from New Delhi via Amritsar, the Sikh holy city in Punjab State, to the Kashmir city of Srinagar, hotbed of a three-year old revolt against Indian rule.

The airline spokesman said the hijacker forced the plane to fly into Pakistani airspace but it was not allowed to land at Lahore, just across the border from Amritsar.

After the plane landed at Amritsar, the hijacker asked for it to be refuelled but airport officials refused. The gunman then fired a shot out

of the plane to prove he was armed.

There was no immediate explanation of how he got the pistol on to the airliner. Indian airport security is tight. All hand luggage is X-rayed and passengers must pass through metal detectors.

Flights to Kashmir and to Punjab, where a Sikh secessionist campaign has killed thousands of people, are subject to particular scrutiny.

It was the third hijack of an Indian Airlines plane in less than a month. No one was hurt in the previous two, in which the hijackers turned out to be unarmed.

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা
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