

Premadasa

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group fighting for independence in Sri Lanka for the assassination.
The Tamil Tigers are the prime suspect in the assassination, said top police official Lionel Gunatilleke.
Speaking at a government news conference on Sunday evening, he pointed out that many other military officers and politicians have been killed by similar Tamil rebel suicide bombers, including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India.
Meanwhile, Tamil separatist group denied involvement in the assassination.
We deny categorically LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) involvement in the assassination, spokesman Lawrence Thilagair told AFP by telephone from the LTTE's office in Paris.
He said Premadasa might have been killed by supporters of opposition leader Lalith Athulathudurai.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia signing the condolence book opened at the Sri Lankan High Commission in Dhaka yesterday. —PID photo



Star file photo of President Ranasinghe Premadasa and his wife with President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the Bangabhaban during the Seventh SAARC Summit in Dhaka on April 10.

Shock grips Dhaka

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showed footage from his speech at the inaugural session of 7th SAARC summit held in Dhaka only 19 days before his death during which the late Sri Lankan leader, speaking in laboured Bangla, had charmed his Bangladeshi audience.
Leaders of both the government and opposition political parties condoled the death of Premadasa and strongly condemned the killing.
President Abdur Rahman Biswas, in a condolence message, expressed his deep shock and sorrow at the death of the Sri Lankan leader.
He termed Premadasa as a 'great friend of Bangladesh,' and added that Sri Lanka had lost a great leader.
President Biswas said the contribution of the late lamented leader to world peace and co-operation would be remembered by all.
The President said Premadasa's death was also 'a loss to us all.'
He also conveyed his deep sympathies to the people of Sri Lanka and members of the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, in a message to the acting President of Sri Lanka D B Wijetunge expressed her deep shock and grief at the death of President Premadasa.
She termed the assassination as a heinous act and added that it had deprived the world

Steps taken to bring agri inputs within farmers' reach : Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here yesterday that her government would ensure better infrastructural facilities to the farmers for improving their condition and asked them to contribute to the process, reports BSS.
While inaugurating the ninth national conference of the Bangladesh Agricultural Economists' Association (BAEA) at the International Conference Centre (ICC), she said her government had identified the villages and the farmers as the targets of development and had been implementing various development programmes in this regard.
The Prime Minister listed several measures taken for the improvement of the conditions of the farmers including the building of socio-economic infrastructures, agricultural loan facilities and ensuring administrative steps and supervision for curbing mischief by touts and middlemen.
She also mentioned that steps had been taken to bring agricultural inputs within the reach of the farmers, and that a new seed policy had been approved to help farmers boost production.
Irrigation facilities are being made easier through the rapid expansion of the rural electrification programmes, Begum Zia said, adding emphasis had been given on agricultural research.
Agriculture Minister M Majid-ul-Huq, president of BAEA Prof A M Moazzem H Hossain, Convener of the conference organising committee Dr S M Ilyas and General Secretary of BAEA Dr M Shahadat Hossain also spoke at the inaugural function of the two-day conference.
The main theme of the conference is 'Poverty alleviation through rural infrastructure and enterprise development.'
At the beginning of the function a minute's silence was observed to pay respect to the memory of the assassinated Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa.
The Prime Minister said four out of every five people of the country are farmers and added the landless and small farmers, who constitute the larger section of the peasantry, play a major role in agricultural production.
The landless and small farmers are deprived in the society and are hostage at the hands of the village touts and middlemen, she said. The situation would improve if such things continue, she added.
Begum Zia said her government had taken up the task of formulating an agricultural policy and urged the agricultural economists to give recommendations in the formulation of the policy. She also urged them to help increase the production of agricultural and non-agricultural goods, expansion of foreign trade and the proper utilisation of foreign assistance in the agriculture sector.
At the meeting, Dr M N Huda and Prof Shamsul Islam were posthumously given the BAEA's gold medal for their outstanding contributions to agricultural economies.

Fire on ship in the Rupsha

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, May 2: Fire broke out on a ship processing owned by a fish company which was anchored at the River Rupsha here Saturday morning.
None was injured as the fire fighters after a day-long effort doused the fire on the MV Hankan of Khulna Food Co. Ltd.
Khulna Fire Brigade officials could not ascertain the cause of fire or the extent of damage.
The owner of the company drew Tk 6 crore from an Agrani Bank, Khulna, in credit against the vessel 7 years ago. The ship, however, remained abandoned at the Rupsha ghat for about 6 years.
The bank is learnt to have filed a case to recover its money and made arrangements to sell the ship through auction when the fire occurred.

Implement accord with SKOP before May 11

Hasina demands spending cut in unproductive sectors
NARAYANGANJ, May 2: Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina today (Sunday) demanded drastic spending cuts in unproductive sectors and increased allocation in education, health and other productive sectors for the well-being of the common man, reports UNB.
The BNP is faithfully following the donors' dictation in terminating workers and withdrawing subsidy but not executing their prescription for reducing spending in unproductive sectors, she told a huge public meeting at Bangabandhu Road here in the afternoon.
The Awami League president accused the ruling party of rampant corruption and misusing foreign aid for the last two years without formulating proper policy to change the economic condition of the deprived multitude.
The BNP has plunged into corruption but the Opposition is not allowed to discuss it in parliament, she told the meeting.
Presided over by Narayanganj City Awami League president Prof Nazma Rahman, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Zillur Rahman and Amir Hossain Amu.
Party central leaders Abdul Jalil, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Moutaz Hossain and Mostafa Sarwar were present on the dais. City General Secretary Shamim Osman conducted the meeting.
Hasina accused the Prime Minister of wasting lakhs of taka on helicopter trips every day and organising meetings to unleash propaganda against opposition parties.
Referring to labour unrest, she said the government's failure to implement its agreements with the SKOP had forced the industrial workers to go for work stoppage.
Earlier, on Saturday, Sheikh Hasina urged the government to implement before May 11 the accord it had signed with the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) accepting certain demands of the workers and employees, according to BSS.
Addressing a big May Day rally at the premises of the Latif Bawani Jute Mills at Demra in Dhaka she said it was the government's moral obligation to honour the agreement it had signed with the SKOP.
Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.
Barrister Talukdar called upon the working people to cooperate with the government to materialise the dream of late President Ziaur Rahman.
BNP Joint Secretary General and Energy Minister Dr Khondokar Mosharrar Hossain who also addressed the gathering urged all to help raise the productivity and create more job opportunities for the uplift of the 112 million people within the framework of market economy.
Jatiya Sramik League held a rally of the working people at Demra in observance of the May Day.
Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, President Member Amir Hossain Amu and Mozaffar Hossain Paltu addressed the rally.
May Day was observed in Chittagong Saturday with a call to establish the rights of the working people.
Trade unions and political parties held discussions, rallies and processions throughout the day.

May Day observed

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torate observed the day through separate programmes.
It was a public holiday. Newspapers published special articles highlighting the significance of the day.
Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh also put out special programmes.
President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, and Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion.
Speakers at the rallies underscored the need for increasing production in mills and factories for improving the lot of the working class.
The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) held a discussion at its central office at Nayapaltan Saturday in observance of the day.
Presided over by Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal President Iskandar Ali, the discussion was participated, among others, by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and Secretary General of the BNP Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar and Labour and

Smuggled goods seized

By Staff Correspondent
A customs intelligence team seized a huge quantity of dates and foreign sarees worth about Tk 17.76 lakh from a parked truck on Mukti Sarani near Sayedabad in the city Saturday afternoon.
Acting on a tip-off, Customs Intelligence led by Superintendent Milan Kanti Datta seized the truck loaded with the goods at 5 pm Saturday but no one had claimed the seized goods until last night, an official source said.
A total of 1844 pieces of Indian cotton and synthetic sarees were hidden under six metric tons of dates in the truck.

2 bread factories, 68 dwellings gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent
A big fire broke out at a slum at Lalbagh in the city gutting two bread factories and 68 thatched houses Saturday.
Witnesses said that the fire at 56/A, Rajnarayan Road, Lalbagh, raged for at least an hour early Saturday morning rendering several hundred people homeless.
The fire was caused by a faulty electric wire, said both firemen and witnesses.
There were no reports of any major injuries.

Paracetamol

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dhury and Justice K M Hasan, on a writ petition for the enforcement of fundamental rights and the right to life and safety against the use and marketing of spurious, poisonous, adulterated and toxic drugs.
The petition singled out paracetamol syrup for 'causing deaths of hundreds and thousands of children by developing acute renal failure due to ingestion of paracetamol syrup containing diethylene glycol.'
According to a press release, the Court asked the government and the Drug Administration to reply to the show cause notice within the next seven days. The next hearing of the petition is scheduled for May 13.
The petition stated that since 1990 it was found that a large number of children died after consuming diethylene glycol, a solvent used in making paracetamol syrup. Diethylene glycol was used as a substitute for the more expensive propylene glycol.
It was also submitted in the petition that there has been conclusive proof by private testing done abroad by the Dhaka Shishu Hospital that diethylene glycol was the poisonous substance in the paracetamol syrup which caused acute renal failure in children.
The petition further submitted that paracetamol syrup containing diethylene glycol continues to be used and sold in the open market.
The petition was served by Syed Borhan Kabir, a journalist, and was moved in Court by Barrister Amir-ul-Islam.
Respondents in the petition included Bangladesh, through the Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Director and Government Inspector of Drug Administration, the Drug Control Committee through its Chairman and the Director of the Institute of Public Health and Drug Testing Laboratory at Mohakhali.
When the Court enquired about the locus standi of the petitioner as an aggrieved person, Barrister Islam replied that each and every citizen is an aggrieved person, as there exists a threat to life of every child in Bangladesh.
It was further argued by the counsel for the petitioner that the government owes a duty under the law to every citizen and consumer to ensure that the medicine available in the market is safe, efficacious and useful.
It was also submitted that there were 36 breaches of duties by the respondents both under common law and statutes, pursuant to the Drug Act of 1940, the Drug Control Ordinance of 1982 and Section 25 (C) of the Special Powers Act of 1974.
The counsel for the petitioner was assisted among others, by Tanya Amir, Abdul Basit Majumder, Mohsin Rashid, Khalilur Rahman, Nurul Huda and Shirin A Choudhury.

Rainfall

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and installed at Kallyanpur.
The capital experienced 99 mm of rainfall in 12 hours on the day.
When contacted over telephone, one official of the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) said that the completed work was the first phase of a long term project by which the people of the Kallyanpur, Mirpur, part of Mohammadpur, Kalabagan and Green Road areas would be benefited.
He said that the second phase of the project with over 100 crore taka Asian Development Bank assistance was on.

The Midnight File

Polling opens in Congo
BRAZZAVILLE, May 2: Voting opened in Congo today to replace the national assembly dissolved last November by President Pascal Lissouba. In a broadcast election message he urged voters to pay no more attention to those who have pillaged the country. He said that under previous leaders, there had been plunder at all levels, reports AFP.

ME talks cost Israel \$ 3m

JERUSALEM, May 2: The Middle East peace talks have already cost Israel three million dollars in expenses alone, a newspaper reported today. Each session of the bilateral negotiations — the ninth is underway now in Washington — has cost an average of 150,000 to 200,000 dollars for a team of 80-100 officials, in hotel rooms, office space, food, telephones and taxis, the Yediot Aharonot said, reports AFP.

5.1 pc growth projected

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The report pointed out that Bangladesh's cumulative foreign debt as of June 30, 1992 amounted to 11,636 million dollar or 48.7 per cent of the GDP. The country spent 337 million dollar in 1991-92 for debt servicing, which was 17.8 per cent of the export earning during the year.
The central bank report depicted a stagnant situation in the nation's capital market. In 1991-92, the Dhaka Stock Exchange saw turnover of shares and debentures of Taka 26.11 crore, down by about 15 per cent from 1990-91.
The report observed that to encourage domestic and foreign investment in the country it is essential to have practical reflection of the consensus on the national economic guidelines for an overall congenial atmosphere, peaceful law and order situation and the desired labour-employer relationship.

Sharif

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The former premier is currently engaged in a nationwide campaign to mobilize people against the president's action. He has also challenged the disqualification in courts.
AP from Karachi adds: The governor of Pakistan's southern Sindh province resigned Saturday, officials said.
Mahmood Haroon refused to say why he stepped down, but many believed it was an attempt to force President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to dismiss the Sindh provincial legislature.

World leaders

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umoon Abdul Gayoom declared three days of national mourning.
The Maldives High Commission (embassy) in Colombo said in a statement that Gayoom was 'shocked and dismayed to hear about the brutal assassination of Premadasa.
In a message of condolence to acting president Wijetunga, he also condemned 'this inhuman act of terrorism,' and hailed Premadasa as a man who was committed to helping the poor.
In Bangladesh, where flags flew at half mast, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said in a televised statement that Bangladesh had lost a true friend and the South Asian region's one billion people 'a far sighted and welfare-oriented leader.'
'It is a tragedy for both Bangladesh and the SAARC,' she said.

Bosnia

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Bosnia's Muslims and Croats have already approved the plan.
But Karadzic had vowed not to sign without concessions on the key issue of a territorial link between the Serbian provinces in the east and west of the republic. Serbs forces have occupied about 70 per cent of Bosnia.
It was not immediately clear whether Karadzic had forced any changes in the peace pact.

VESSEL REQUIRES
THE LIBERIAN SHIP M. V. 'TONY BEST' AGGROUNDED OFF MONGLA FAIRWAY AT POSITION LATITUDE 21 DEGREES 29 MINUTES NORTH LONGITUDE 90 DEGREES 30 MINUTES EAST (25 MILES AWAY FROM KUAKATA, PATUAKHALI AND 70 MILES AWAY FROM MONGLA FAIRWAY) REQUIRES SUPPLY OF FOOD AND FRESH WATER ON EMERGENCY BASIS. INTERESTED PARTIES ARE REQUESTED TO IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THE LOCAL AGENT: AEKASHIPPING LINES
11, DHARMAVA CROSS ROAD, KHULNA. TEL: OFF: 22471/20755-RES: 20942 FAX: 880-41-61279