

Inside Today

Article

Implementation of Israel-PLO Accord a must for Comprehensive ME Peace
Column: Spotlight On Middle East
by Muslehuddin Ahmad
Page 4

International

Clinton confident of Suu Kyi's success in struggle for democracy

India to conduct 3rd test flight of Agni Saturday
Page 5

Business

US-Japan trade spat: Asians praise Hosokawa's stance
Workers' strikes engulf former Soviet republics
Pages 6, 7

Women On The Move

Violence Against Women: Not Only a Phenomenon of Poverty; Bargaining with a Child's Life; Women are Managers of Villages; Women Demand More Political Power
Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



Ekuhshey Observance Street Theatre Loses its Appeal
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina shocked

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and president of Bangladesh Awami League Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her profound shock at the death of Anwarul Islam Bobby, a renowned journalist and founder editor of The Daily Morning Sun. Bobby contributed significantly by associating himself with the newspaper industry and also editing newspapers. Sheikh Hasina said in a condolence message sent to Leena Islam. The Awami League chief said in his death the newspapers in Bangladesh lost an eminent journalist, reports BSS.

Al, Chapainawabganj president dead

Chapainawabganj town Awami League president Prof G K M Shamsul Huda died of a heart attack in Rajshahi yesterday. He was 49. Family sources said in Dhaka last night. Huda left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death. His Namaz-e-Janaza will be held at his residence at Chapainawabganj town today and will be buried at his family graveyard. Huda was a BSS correspondent for a long time. He was also vice-president of RUCSU in the sixties, reports BSS.

DUTA discussion

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) will hold a discussion at 4 pm tomorrow to mark the Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Day at the university club bhaban. DUTA urged all its members to attend the discussion to pay homage to the late intellectual, reports UNB.

Shri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Feb	Shri	Iftar
05	17	—	6:01 pm
06	18	5:09 am	6:02 pm
07	19	5:09 am	6:02 pm

Jute mills privatisation to be launched in March

By A Special Correspondent

Starting from next March the Privatisation Board will invite bids for purchase of nine government-owned jute mills.

The privatisation of these nine mills will be completed by December this year. In the next phase, which will continue upto June 1996, nine more jute mills will be privatised.

The programme for privatisation of government-owned jute mills has been drawn up as part of the jute sector adjustment operation being financed by a 200 million dollar credit from the World Bank.

The privatisation programme will reduce the capacity of publicly owned jute mills from the present 15,800 looms to 7000 looms in the first phase and to 4000 looms in the second phase. After the privatisation programme is implemented the public sec-

tector documents, etc. will be done by the consultants.

According to the latest report, bids made by consulting firms are still under processing. There is some doubt about whether the consultants would be in place to provide inputs in time for the process of privatisation to begin in time.

Meanwhile, minority shares owned by the government in five jute mills have already been sold to the private mills owners. This process of divestiture of the government's minority share in jute mills started in January 1991. Twenty-one of the 33 mills where the government had a minority share accepted the offer. Discussion between the government and the jute mill owners who had not come forward to accept the government's offer of minority shares has remained stalled.

While the privatisation of government-owned jute mills is still to take off, a significant number of permanent workers have already been separated from their jobs under a voluntary programme.

During 1990-1992, 15,000 permanent employees were retrenched. Another 12,000 have been retrenched last year.

By the end of the current financial year another 8000 employees will be retrenched.

These sequence of retrenchments will bring the number of permanent positions to 80,650. Permanent positions in the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), which is responsible for managing government-owned jute mills will also be lowered concurrently to 100 permanent positions by 1996. The BJMC currently has 625 permanent positions.

The hardest hit area was believed to be the province of

DCC repolling: Hearing of writ today

By Staff Correspondent

Hearing of the writ petition filed with the High Court division of the Supreme Court relating to repolling in three centres under Ward no. 57 of the Dhaka City Corporation will be held today.

A commissioner candidate of the Ward, Abul Ahsan Talukder Noni, filed the writ after which a division bench of the High Court had issued a stay order on repolling in the three centres following a preliminary hearing on February 8.

Earlier, the High Court had issued rule nisi on the Election Commission and the Government following the writ challenging cancellation of the results of the three concerned centres, all inside the Dhaka University campus.

Meanwhile, another commissioner candidate of the Ward, Khwaja Habibulah, has appealed to the court to with-

See Page 12 Col 8

WB meet on JMB, jute tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The World Bank board of governors' meeting, to consider the 450 million US dollar loan proposals for the Jamuna Bridge Project and Jute Sector Adjustment Credit (JSAC), has been re-scheduled for tomorrow.

The meeting was earlier scheduled to be held on Tuesday last.

The expected approval would cap the already completed negotiations for a 250 million dollar funding of the JSAC and a 200 million dollar loan for co-financing, along with Japan and the Asian Development Bank, the Jamuna Bridge Project.

We were very complacent after our overwhelming victory in the 1991 parliamentary elections and concentrated more in running the government at the cost of organising the party, a central leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

The complacency was perhaps bred by the fact that the party had won those elections despite its weak organisational structure across the country.

Earthquake kills 134 in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Feb 16: A powerful earthquake slammed the island of Sumatra Wednesday, killing at least 134 and reducing many buildings to rubble, reports AP.

The earthquake, which struck just after midnight (1700 GMT Tuesday), had an initial Richter reading of 6.5, according to officials in Jakarta. The US Geological Survey in Washington put the strength at 7.2.

"Most of the victims were sound asleep," government spokesman Hotman Apik said Wednesday. "Some of the victims died without knowing what hit them."

Apik said at least 134 people had died, and another 500 were seriously injured.

The National Search and Rescue Agency said helicopters from the agency, the air force and other local military units have been mobilised to help rescue efforts.

The hardest hit area was believed to be the province of

Lampung, on southeastern Sumatra.

Destruction from the quake and heavy rains has made it difficult to contact Lampung. Roads have been churned up and phone lines shredded by the force of the quake.

Within Lampung, the most devastation was believed to be in the district of Liwa and the sub-district of Sekincua, which has a population of 50,000 people.

In the sub-district of Belatu, the earthquake reduced a 17-kilometer road into a field of mud and rocks, cutting off communications.

The quake, the first in Lampung in the 20 years, was felt throughout south Sumatra, and the tremors were also noticed as far away as Jakarta, the weather bureau reported.

UNB adds: Bangladeshi Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina expressed her profound shock at the death of people in the earthquake.

Bangladesh post 2nd ICC win

Sports Reporter

Persistent bad weather bowed temporarily to the zeal and will of the Bangladeshi batsmen who braved a rain-ruined pitch to snatch their second successive win by the now-familiar margin of seven wickets against East and Central Africa in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi yesterday.

Scheduled for Tuesday, the match that saw Bangladesh poised for a comfortable win, had to be stopped halfway because of a downpour with

Detailed report on Page 10

Bangladesh 69 short of a win from 42 overs. At that point of time Bangladesh were placed on 30 for one wicket from eight overs.

Earlier, Golam Nowshad Prince and Minhazul Abedin Nanu registered their best bowling figures in the ICC championship to bundle East Africa out for 98 in 36.2 overs. Left-arm paceman Prince took four for 36 to be called as the man-of-the-match.

The Bangladeshi batsmen defied the threats of an over-

See Page 12 Col 3

Second batch of Chakma refugees returns today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 16: The second batch of Chakma refugees will be repatriated tomorrow through Tabalchhari post of the Khagrachari Hill District.

According to official sources, 101 families of tribal refugees comprising 529 members are scheduled to return from Tripura camps.

Bangladesh officials will remain present at Tabalchhari reception camp to welcome the homecoming of the second batch.

The first batch of Chakma refugees numbering 282 of 77 families came back on Tuesday and they have since been sent to their homesteads by the administration, official sources said.

See Page 12 Col 8

Pak special envoy meets PM

The visiting special envoy of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

Khaled Seelim, senior-most Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, handed over a letter from Benazir to Begum Zia.

The special envoy explained Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue to the Prime Minister.

The Pakistan special envoy also called on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at his office here yesterday.

During the discussion, the Minister stressed the need for increased cooperation between the two countries under the framework of SAARC.

"Everyone in South Asia wants peace so that all efforts could be devoted to the socio-economic development," the Foreign Minister said, and added that "Bangladesh appreciates the Pakistan Prime Minister for her concern on the issue."

The envoy expressed satisfaction at the coordination of mutual position on different issues in the international forum.

2 DU teachers robbed on campus

By Staff Correspondent

Two lady teachers of Dhaka University were robbed of their gold ornaments by a gang of muggers on the campus yesterday noon.

The muggers, according to witnesses, waylaid Prof Nurun Nahar Rahman of the Department of Pharmacy and Prof Gulshan Ara Latifa of the Department of Zoology near the Mukarram Hussain Khundaker Science Bhaban and snatched their necklaces and bangles at dagger point.

The younger sister of Prof Nurun Nahar, accompanying her sister, was also robbed of her necklace.

The muggers came on the DU-campus in a taxi No. 02-61/8 in which they sped away immediately after the mugging.

The mugging incident occurred some 100 yards from the Bangla Academy's Book Fair where the police are on duty.

Meanwhile, the mugging in

See Page 12 Col 2

Anwarul Islam's body arrives tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The body of Anwarul Islam Bobby, the founder-editor and publisher of The Morning Sun, will be flown back home tomorrow from Dubai where he breathed his last on Tuesday.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Jumma prayers. He will be buried beside his father's grave at the Banani graveyard. Before the janaza, the body will be taken to The Morning Sun office and the National Press Club.

Bobby, 54, died of blood cancer, at the Al Rashid Hospital in Dubai. He had to be off-loaded from a Bangladesh Biman flight because of his deteriorating health condition.

His son-in-law, Aziz Mohammad Bhai, earlier flew to Dubai to bring the body. The arrival of the body is delayed due to the non-availability of Biman flight, family sources said.

Bobby's body will be accompanied by his wife Leena Islam and youngest daughter Samreen Islam, who were beside him when he breathed his last. Bobby's only son, Aneel Islam, now studying in the United States, returned to Dhaka yesterday to attend the funeral of his father. The quirkhwan of Bobby will take place after the burial on Friday.

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