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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina shocked

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina expressed her shock at the death of more than 50 people in a stampede at a railway station in South China yesterday. In a message to Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, she expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved families and hoped that Almighty Allah would give them courage and fortitude to bear their personal loss, reports UNB.

One run over in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Feb 18: A 40-year-old woman, Habibunnesa, was run over by a truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near the Sonakhal Bridge this afternoon. Police seized the truck but the driver managed to escape. A case was lodged with Sonargaon thana.

BNP Sunamganj body

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has announced Sunamganj district convening committee. Advocate Fazul Haq Aspia has been made the Convenor of the 22-member committee, reports BSS.

Sehri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
07	19	—	6:02 pm
08	20	5:08 am	6:03 pm
09	21	5:08 am	6:03 pm

Lin Wengqiang, 36 (in military uniform) is being taken in by the Taiwanese police yesterday. Lin diverted a Chinese Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 with 130 passengers on board to Taipei

— AFP photo

\$248m for jute sector adjustment programme

World Bank okays \$200m for Jamuna Bridge project

By Staff Correspondent

The World Bank is to give a loan of 200 million US dollars for the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Project (JMBP).

The Bank will also provide Bangladesh with a credit of 248 million dollars for the jute sector adjustment programme.

The loans were approved at a meeting of the Executive Directors of the WB in Washington, on Thursday.

Both the loans are being provided at a highly concessional rate. The interest free loan for the JMBP carries only a service charge of 0.75 per

cent. It is repayable in 40 years with a grace period of ten years.

With the World Bank's approval of the loan for the proposed Jamuna Bridge, the country is set to go forward with the long cherished bridge over the river Jamuna. The estimated cost of the bridge is 700 million US dollars out of which Bangladesh will give one hundred million and the rest will be provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan.

With the jute sector credit, Bangladesh will now start de-

nationalising 18 government owned jute mills in the next two years. Moreover, the government's privatisation programme aims at reducing the number of excess manpower, about 20,000, in the jute sector.

The negotiations for the jute sector credit with the World Bank started after a European Commission funded jute sector restructuring study was completed in 1992.

On the other hand, the feasibility study of the JMBP was initiated in the 1970s and the

project was taken up for implementation in 1991.

Japan, which raised a lot of questions concerning the viability of the project, finally agreed to co-finance the project last December.

Meanwhile, sources in the JMB authority said, the bid evaluation of all the four components of the project has been finalised. Work orders will also be issued shortly, they said.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, is due to lay the foundation of the Jamuna Bridge on March 20.



Quotations from eminent Bengali poets and writers are being written on the adjacent walls of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city prior to the *Amar Ekushey* on Monday.

— Star photo

BBC to set up studio in Dhaka, appoint local journalists

By Sharier Khan

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) will set up a studio in Dhaka and appoint local journalists for its feature services. Peter Mangold, Head of the BBC Bengali Section of the Eastern Service told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BBC has been allowed by the government to broadcast programmes for one year from May 1 using the studios at the Shahbagh office of Radio Bangladesh. The programmes will be on the air from 6 to 9:30 am and from 4 to 11:15 pm daily.

Mangold said, BBC will use the 100 metre FM band mainly for its English programmes but would also relay a one-hour 20 minute programme in Bengali daily.

The target of the BBC's Bengali programme would mainly be the youths. The news and feature will be broadcast in English. There will also be an English learning programme," he said.

The BBC will pay the government eight pounds sterling per broadcast hour plus the electricity bill.

Its programmes will be free from any sort of government restrictions. Peter Mangold pointed out.

The BBC Bengali service has the largest audience in South Asia. Out of our 45 million listeners in South Asia, seven million are in Bangladesh," he added.

The BBC started negotiating with the government in late 1991. It had initially asked for permission to broadcast in the Medium Wave (MW) which had

larger audience and also a better sound reception quality

than that of the FM band.

The government did not allow BBC to use the MW band but later allowed it to use the 100 metre FM band.

The BBC has already intensified the coverage of the activities in Bangladesh. Next month, it would broadcast a series of programmes on the independence movement based on interviews. The number of such programmes will further increase in the future, the BBC broadcaster said.

Presently, the broadcasting corporation is analysing the outcomes of two surveys on its Bengali listeners which will be the basis of its programmes after May 1.

The BBC broadcasts in 40 languages around the world. Transmission from Dhaka will also be its first such venture in South Asia.

Rally in city today

CAMPE launches

movement for mass literacy

By Staff Correspondent

The Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), a platform of 32 social and voluntary development organisations will hold a rally in the capital today as part of its programme to launch a social movement for mass literacy.

CAMPE Coordinator Abdulla Al-Muti Sharafuddin at a news conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday said the rally would be organised to drum up public support for mass education.

Dr Sharafuddin said, that to attain the ideals of the historic Ekushey there was no alternative to launching greater national movement to achieve total literacy.

He said that only 62 per cent of the total adult population of the country would be educated by the government's

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200 DU students food poisoned

Star Report

At least 200 students of Dhaka University's Jagannath Hall suffered food poisoning yesterday after taking their mid-day meal at one of the hall cafeterias.

The conditions of 52 of the affected students were stated to be serious late last night. However, none of them was removed to hospital.

Hall students said that they felt discomfort and many of them started vomiting soon after they had their lunch at the October Smriti building cafeteria.

All the students refused to have their dinner at the cafeteria and took their meals at the nearby restaurants.

Many students were seen bed-ridden in their rooms being attended by fellow colleagues.

cauliflower.

As the news of illness spread among the students, the cafeteria was immediately shut down by the agitating hall inmates.

During a visit to the hall cafeteria yesterday, this correspondent found heaps of unconsumed food items prepared for dinner remaining untouched at the kitchen.

All the students refused to have their dinner at the cafeteria and took their meals at the nearby restaurants.

Many students were seen bed-ridden in their rooms being attended by fellow colleagues.

Most of them had developed

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Phoolan to be freed on parole

NEW DELHI, Feb 18: The Supreme Court ordered a state Friday to grant parole to India's bandit queen, a lower-caste woman who was jailed 13 years ago for allegedly killing 18 upper-caste Hindus, but never put on trial, reports AP.

The ruling came a month after Uttar Pradesh decided to drop all charges against Phoolan Devi, who became a heroine 20 years ago by riding a horse across the state dressed in khaki fatigues and a red bandana, and carrying a double-barrelled shot gun.

Supreme Court Judges JS Verma and PB Sawant ordered that the 37-year-old woman, whose name once spelt terror in large parts of Northern India, be released on a personal bond.

The justices also said police must provide her with bodyguards in new Delhi, where she wants to remain after being freed to avoid attacks she reportedly fears in Uttar Pradesh.

Last month, Uttar Pradesh's new Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav, a lower-caste

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Bosnian Serbs pull back heavy weapons today

LUKAVICA BARRACKS, Bosnia, Feb 18: The Bosnian Serbs promised today to pull back their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo or place them under United Nations control by Saturday night, a day ahead of the NATO air strikes ultimatum.

At the same time, the UN said it planned to station armed peacekeeping troops from midday on Friday (1100 GMT) to control the sites where Serb heavy guns would be collected.

The announcements came after talks at the Serb military barracks at Lukavica, just outside besieged Sarajevo, between the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, and the head of the UN protection force, Yasushi Akashi.

In an attempt to head off the threat of NATO air strikes, the Bosnian Serbs have already agreed to a Russian proposal that they should pull their guns back from Sarajevo, which they have besieged for 22 months.

Karadzic's statement was the first time the Serbs have given a timetable for the pull-out, while Akashi's decision to send in troops to guard the weapons appeared designed to

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