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NEWS BRIEFS

Hanif takes over today

The newly elected Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation, Mohammad Hanif, will take over charge today at the head office of the corporation's Fulbaria Nagar Bhaban. Hanif is expected to address the officials of the corporation after taking over his responsibility at 11:30 am, reports BSS.

New Thai envoy

By Staff Correspondent

Thailand's new ambassador to Bangladesh Sunthorn Vithayakom arrives in Dhaka shortly to take up his new assignment. He succeeds Vichai Vannasin, who left Dhaka yesterday. Vichai has been appointed Thailand's ambassador to New Delhi. Meanwhile, Jong Kyoubyn, the ambassador-designate of South Korea has already arrived in the city. Jong will present his credentials to the President on March 20.

Housewife robbed

A housewife was robbed of her cash and ornaments worth about Tk 20,000 from Taitala area in the town yesterday. Nadira Begum, 56, wife of Nazirul Haque, was robbed by three hijackers when she was passing the area riding in a rickshaw at about 8 in the morning, reports UNB.

Russia to try '91 coup leaders

MOSCOW, Mar 11: Russia's Supreme Court decided today to resume the trial of the hardline communist leaders of the failed 1991 coup, reversing a military court which cancelled the hearings after an amnesty voted by Parliament, Itar-Tass reported, says AFP.

Urs at Biswa Zaker Manjil Mar 19

The annual urs of Hazrat Enayeturabi will be held at the Biswa Zaker Manjil in Faridpur district on March 19. It will be inaugurated by present peer Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Faridpuri, reports UNB.

Delhi won't allow UN or OIC fact-finding team

Pak-occupied Kashmir is equally disputed: US

WASHINGTON, Mar 11: Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is also a disputed territory, Ms Robin Raphael, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, has said, adding that US believed the Kashmir dispute would best be solved through bilateral talks in the spirit of the Shimla Agreement, reports PTL.

Reiterating that the US regarded the whole of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as an unresolved issue, Ms Raphael told the Ackerman subcommittee of the US Senate yesterday, 'it has been our policy since 1947.'

"We believe," she said 'that the best way for that dispute to be resolved is by discussions and negotiations between India and Pakistan in the spirit of the 1972 Shimla Accord. "As a practical matter, it is important that any settlement and resolution take into account the desires of the people of Kashmir," she said.

When Ackerman asked in what form this could be done, she replied 'that is for the parties to decide.'

She said that a lot of human rights abuses are still occurring in Kashmir both on the part of the militants and the security forces. While recent steps by the government of India had increased accountability, the improvement has yet to be reflected on the ground.

AFP from Delhi adds: India will not permit the United Nations or the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to send fact-finding teams to Kashmir, Minister of State for External Affairs Salman Kuresheed said today.

He also denied a Pakistani claim that India had agreed to allow envoys from Muslim nations to visit Kashmir in exchange for dropping a resolution at a UN commission meeting in Geneva which condemned India for human rights violations in the state.

"New Delhi-based ambassadors of oil member-states are free to travel to Kashmir any time," said Kuresheed, who spearheaded the successful diplomatic campaign in Geneva to thwart the Pakistani resolution.

He also told reporters that the OIC delegate to the meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva had been invited to visit New Delhi to discuss the situation in the strife-torn state bordering Pakistan.

But the minister said the OIC and United Nations would not be allowed to send fact-finding teams to Kashmir, where a Muslim separatist rebellion has left more than 8,000 people dead since 1989.

The resolution was dropped at the last moment on Wednesday after 14 nations led by China and Iran urged Pakistan to withdraw the motion and bilaterally resolve its territorial dispute with India.

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Fish depleting due to shrinking habitat

By Inam Ahmed

The country's fish population is depleting greatly because of the shrinking aquatic habitat.

The aquatic habitat estimated to be around four million hectares two decades back, has now been reduced to about 2.4 million hectares, according to a Bangladesh fisheries resource survey.

"The withdrawal of water in the upper reaches of the main rivers, increased irrigation, and sedimentation have led to the depletion of fish habitat," Dr A K M Nuruzzaman, Member Director (Fisheries) of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) said.

In the 1970s, the country had four million hectares of perennial water, but now the water in the winter dries up in the 1.6 million hectares of water bodies.

As a result, the fish production almost stagnated at six to eight lakh tons annually in the last 30 years.

"The decline in inland open water fish production is alarming," Dr Ataur Rahman, Director, Fisheries Department, said, "in the last five years alone, the flood plain fish production has dropped by ten thousand tons. The country is now becoming more and more dependent on fish culture in closed waterbodies."

In the 1980s, the annual fish production was 8.33 lakh tons. It then started falling and dropped to 6.5 lakh tons.

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Bus terminals now haven for black-marketeers

By Staff Correspondent

Black-marketeers are making extra profits at the bus terminals of Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Mohakhali where the rush of inter-district bus passengers almost doubled yesterday.

Passengers trying to reach their destinations before the Eid-ul-Fitr were compelled to buy bus tickets at 10 to 50 per cent higher price.

Passengers at Gabtoli Bus Terminal alleged that a 60 taka bus ticket was being sold in black market at Tk 100 while a 100 taka ticket at Tk 150.

According to the Road Transport Owners' Association, these days some 60,000 passengers were leaving Dhaka on some 1000 buses and minibuses from the three terminals. Normally, some 35,000

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Regional telecom network likely

A move is underway to set up a regional telecommunication network linking Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

An official source told PROBE news agency that the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) is currently considering a survey report of a New Delhi-based telecom consultancy firm to set up the network.

Experts from Bangladesh, India and Nepal attending a seminar of the countries of Asia and the Pacific held in Delhi in September, 1992 had decided to conduct the survey to explore the possibility of improving the regional telecommunication system.

A survey mission visited the three countries, from August 14 to September 13 last year.

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Jumatul Wida observed

Jamatul Wida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, was observed yesterday in the country with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports UNB.

Special prayers were offered in all mosques of the country seeking divine blessings for the peace, progress and prosperity of the nation and the Muslim Ummah.

Thousands of Muslim devotees offered their prayers at the biggest Jumma congregation at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

A waz mahfil on the significance of Jumatul Wida and Eid-ul-Fitr was also held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

BSS adds: The Muslim devotees sought blessings of Almighty Allah for taking back the control of the Al-Quds Mosque the first Kaaba of the Muslims at Jerusalem, from the occupation of Zionist regime.

Last Jumma was observed as the Al-Quds Day throughout the world by Muslims.

Special prayer was offered for the peace of the souls of

See Page 12 Col 4

BBC series on history of Liberation War soon

By Staff Correspondent

The BBC is to broadcast a series of programmes based on the War of Independence of Bangladesh every Friday from March 25, according to a fax message issued by the BBC's Dhaka Correspondent.

With the series titled 'Fight for Freedom: Bangladesh's War of Independence', the BBC endeavours to tell this history in an objective way and from a neutral standpoint.

The series is based on interviews made by Ataus Samad of the Bengali Section of the BBC, with very senior journalists of Bangladesh, political leaders who directly participated in different movements, sector commanders, freedom fighters, including the one who killed his father for being a collaborator of the Pakistani army, present generation youths and people from all walks of life.

Many unknown facts and forgotten incidents will be revealed in this series, the fax message says. The series will be broadcast on Fridays during the third transmission at 1630 GMT.



A beautician laying an intricate design on the palm of a girl with a cone of henna yesterday. A large number of women were seen crowding the city's beauty parlours as Eid festival nears.

Ctg mayor promises to rise above politics

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 11: The newly elected mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury said he would be above party politics in discharging his duties.

Addressing a large gathering at the conference hall of the Chittagong City Corporation on the occasion of his taking over today as its first elected mayor, Mohiuddin said "I want to turn CCC into a non-partisan and ideal organisation by setting aside all its past disgraces."

He said the cases of party-influence, if any, during his mayorship showed he brought to his knowledge.

Mohiuddin called for concerted efforts to solve the problems of Chittagong city inhabited by 33 lakh people.

"I would seek cooperation of all to run this city corporation which is already overburdened with problems," said Mohiuddin. Mohiuddin announced that he would soon launch a drive to eradicate mosquito from the city.

Earlier, Mohiuddin was seen at the city people from 'terrorism' unleashed by mosquitoes which are sucking the blood like miscreant people," he said.

"Besides, I would make efforts to generate more income for the Chittagong City Corporation by eradicating corruption," he added. Mohiuddin also sought cooperation of the government to run the corporation in a better way in order to ensure proper development of the city.

He categorically said that credit would go to the government if he could serve the people of this city in a much better way.

The function was also addressed by the Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Omar Faruk who was mayor-in-charge during the interim period and the chief executive of the Chittagong City Corporation Abu Hafiz.

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PM discusses issues with 2 ministers

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday held an exclusive meeting with Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at her residence.

Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain briefed the Prime Minister about the latest situation in Dhaka University regarding the forthcoming DUCSU elections while Mostafizur Rahman gave the feedback of the election campaign in Magura.

When contacted over telephone, the Foreign Minister said "it was not any formal meeting. She just called me after iftar to know the situation in Magura."

Dr Mosharraf also said he had informed the party chief of the latest situation inside Dhaka University and DUCSU.

But a reliable source said another common issue concerning the two ministers was also discussed at the meeting. He did not elaborate.

Pak citizen with \$ 21000 held at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

A Pakistani citizen, Sayeed Akhter, was held at Zia International Airport (ZIA) with foreign currency equivalent to Tk 8.64 lakh yesterday morning.

Customs surveillance men arrested Sayeed on a charge of carrying 21000 US dollars. He was bound for Singapore by a Bangladesh Biman flight.

A customs official said that on suspicion they scanned a brief case of Sayeed and found the currency hidden in a powder case. He had also Bangladeshi and Pakistani currencies with him, the official added.

Sayeed, charged with an attempt to smuggle out foreign currency, was detained in the Cantonment police station. He is likely to be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate.

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Minu assumes office

RAJSHAHI, Mar 11: Mizanur Rahman Minu took over the charge from Administrator and Additional Deputy Commissioner Aminul Islam as Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation at a simple ceremony at the mayor's office here this afternoon, reports BSS.

Almost all the newly-elected ward commissioners were present. Speaking on the occasion, Minu called upon the city dwellers to extend their whole-hearted support and co-operation to him for implementation of various development projects.

He said he would work to make Rajshahi a modern city. Referring to his election pledges, he said, "I will work for the overall benefit of the city people and all-round development of Rajshahi City Corporation."

Earlier on his arrival at Rajshahi Airport from Dhaka after attending the swearing-in ceremony, he was received by Azizar Rahman, MP, Lutfun Nessa Hossain, MP, Advocate Ekhlas Hossain, president, city BNP and advocate Kamrul Monir, General Secretary, district BNP, officials and union leaders of the city corporation.

Sergeant murder: One more held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested another suspect killer of police sergeant Muhammad Hasanul Farhad from the city's Patuati area last night.

Kotwali police arrested Ahmed Hossain alias Ahmed while he was roaming around the area around 10:30 last night. Ahmed, 30, was detained in the city's Detective Branch office.

Ahmed was reportedly an accomplice of Sagor who was arrested a day before on the same charge. Sagor is now on police remand. Ahmed competed for the post of ward commissioner of ward No-70 in the last city corporation polls, but was defeated, said police.

Farhad was killed in a cross-fire during clashes between two rival student factions in the Jagannath University College on Saturday.

Police included 52 people in their first information report (FIR). Only 22 of them have been arrested.



The bodies of three South African right wingers lay beside a car as a Bophuthatswana policeman looks on. The three men were killed during heavy fighting between Bophuthatswana police and South African rightists yesterday.

50 killed in South African clash

MMABATHO, Mar 11: At least 50 people, including three white extremists, were killed and hundreds injured today in bloody clashes in Bophuthatswana, the public SABC television said, reports AFP.

Most of the deaths occurred in Mabopane, some 20 kilometres north of Pretoria, where looting and rioting broke out and South African police crossed the border to "protect South African citizens," SABC said.

AP adds: Armed White extremists poured into the Black homeland of Bophuthatswana on Friday to bolster its authoritarian ruler in what loomed as the bloodiest showdown yet between supporters and opponents of political reform.

South African Army troops took up positions at the South

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US, Russia try to persuade Arafat to resume talks

TUNIS, Mar 11: The United States and Russia, co-sponsors of the Middle East peace conference, tried to persuade PLO leader Yasser Arafat today to resume peace negotiations with Israel stalled by the Hebron massacre, reports Reuters.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher sent a message to Arafat today concerning a US resolution condemning the Hebron massacre and talks with Israel. PLO sources said.

Russia's Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was shuttling between Israel and PLO headquarters in Tunisia to discuss with the Israeli government and Arafat how to get the talks back on track.

"Our aim is to see how we can save the peace process," Kozyrev said in Tel Aviv.

"We must also provide additional security and we support an international presence. These are the main issues which we wish to discuss and

they already have the support of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. We would like Israel to support them too," he added.

Yasser Arafat said in an interview published in a French newspaper today that Israel's army, together with settlers, was behind the Hebron massacre.

"The Hebron massacre was planned and organised by units of the Israeli army and by armed settlers," the Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman told the daily Le Figaro in an interview conducted in Tunis.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International called on the Israeli government today to review the way it forces police the occupied territories, in the light of last month's Hebron Mosque massacre.

The London-based human rights organisation said the Israeli government should either adequately train these

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Rmdn	Mar	Sehri	Iftar
28	12	—	6:10 pm
29	13	4:50 am	6:10 pm
30	14	4:49 am	6:11 pm