

TABLOID

The Star Computer Special, our regular monthly section on the information revolution, goes tabloid from today. The eight-page handy supplement comes free with today's issue of your favourite English daily.

Inside Today

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UN needs 12000 more troops to enforce truce in Bosnia

Hamas, Jihad activists demand revenge for Hebron carnage

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The Roving Tea Man

NOTICE

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed from March 13 to March 15 on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr. Therefore, there will be no issue of the paper on March 14, 15 and 16.

NEWS BRIEFS

Eid in Gulf states today

DUBAI, Mar 12: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates announced overnight that the three-day Islamic Eid-ul-Fitr holiday would start on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The official news agencies of the five states said that Saturday will be the last day of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Voting time for Magura by-polls

The Election Commission has revised the voting time for March 20, by-election of Magura-2 constituency. The casting of vote will begin at 8 in the morning and continue till 4 pm without any break, reports UNB.

CU probe body

CHITTAGONG, Mar 12: The inquiry committee to probe alleged leak-out of question paper of first year BBA admission test 1993/94 of the University of Chittagong will receive reports on the matter from the interested persons on March 21 and 22 at the university arts faculty and the university club at the Sholahar rail gate respectively.

Relief for Bosnia

Bangladesh government has decided to send relief materials for the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The relief materials included 1,000 tons of rice, 1 lakh US dollar and woollen garments and tea.

Dacoity in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent
SYLHET, Mar 12: Dacoits looted valuables and cash including foreign currency worth about Tk two lakh from a returnee from Saudi Arabia last night at Tola Haor of Sader.

Sohri, Ifar timings			
Rmdn	Mar	Sohri	Ifar
29	13	—	6:10 pm
30	14	4:49 am	6:11 pm

6 killed, 100 hurt in Ctg train mishap

CHITTAGONG, Mar 12: At least six persons were killed on the spot and over 100 injured, 20 of them critically, in a major train accident today which took place at Mirersarai, 50 kilometres from the city here.

But according to unofficial sources, the death toll may rise to 10 as the spot was reportedly littered with mutilated bodies and dismembered limbs.

The victims were identified as Ripon Ahmed Chowdhury, 13, of Bara Kapor village of Moulvibazar thana, Rahela Sultana, 23, Cashier, Agrabad Chittagong Branch of AB Bank, Nurul Amin, 40, of Dakkhin Satero village of Chhagalnaiya, Feni, Alamgir Hossain, 35, Sub-Asstt. Engineer(Works) Railway, Kadamtali of

From Staff Correspondent

Chittagong and his 12-year-old son and an unidentified middle-aged man.

Of the injured, 40 persons were released after first aid and the rest were admitted to different hospitals and clinics, police said.

Among the four persons admitted into Chittagong Medical Hospital, the condition of three victims — Liton, 18, Aminul Momin, 20, and Moqbul Ahmed, 20, — were critical, doctors said.

The mishap occurred when a Sylhet-bound 'Paharika Express' train from the Chittagong railway station suddenly derailed and six compartments fell away at Hadi Fakir Haat, between Barakata and Baralardala stations under Mirersarai thana, railway

sources said.

Though the actual cause of the accident is still unclear, railway and police sources attributed it to the curving of the track following the breaking of a slipper over a culvert.

A senior Railway official, however, did not rule out the possibility of sabotage.

Railway sources said a rescue team was immediately sent to the spot and high officials of the railway and other administrations had visited the spot.

Meanwhile, a high-powered four-member body has been constituted to unearth the cause of the accident.

Railway sources informed this correspondent that around 1200 passengers for home bound to celebrate Eid, were on board the train.

Hanif takes charge as city mayor

By Staff Correspondent

The first elected Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mohammad Hanif assumed his office at the newly-constructed Nagar Bhaban at Fulbaria in the capital yesterday morning.

The new mayor took over charge formally by signing an office record of his joining soon after he reached the DCC office at 11:05 am. Chief Executive Officer Abdul Jabbar and other high officials of the corporation were present during the signing of the record at the mayor's chamber.

The new city father, who arrived at the DCC headquarters on board a Pajero jeep carrying the national flag, was received by the Chief Executive Officer at the gate with a bouquet. The suited mayor was then taken to his chamber on the first floor where he received more wreaths from the DCC officials and employees.

During his two-and-a-half hour stay at the Nagar Bhaban, Hanif addressed a gathering of the new DCC commissioners, officers and employees at the conference room and later went round various sections of the corporation building, including the office of the em-



Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Md Hanif (R) taking over charge at the Nagar Bhaban yesterday. — Star photo

Tragic!

By Staff Correspondent

A senior railway official and his driver were killed in a road accident in the city yesterday evening.

A K M Zainul Abedin, 58, Additional Director General of Bangladesh Railway, was scheduled to fly to Chittagong along with Railway Secretary Dr Mashur Rahman to inspect the train accident there earlier in the day which left six people killed and 100 others injured.

Zainul Abedin's vehicle met with an accident near the Naval Headquarters at Banani on the Airport Road when he was rushing to avail a train for Chittagong after having failed to catch the last Biman flight to the port city.

A Dhaka-bound minibus coming from Mymensingh collided head on with Abedin's car and left both him and his driver Lakitullah dead on the spot. Bus driver Sona Mia and two helpers suffered injuries in the accident. The driver was

4 states may appoint hony consuls

By M Anwarul Haq

At least four countries are actively considering appointing honorary consuls or consul generals in Bangladesh. The countries are Mauritius, Austria, Singapore and Finland.

As most of these countries do not have permanent resident ambassadors in Dhaka, they will appoint honorary consuls to increase economic ties with Bangladesh. Bangladesh, on the other hand, has 26 honorary consuls abroad while there are 13 consuls in Dhaka or Chittagong representing as may countries.

The most recent appointment of an honorary consul has been made by the Maldives which maintains diplomatic ties with Bangladesh through its High Commissioner in Colombo. The Maldives does not have a resident mission in Dhaka or New Delhi.

Farooq Ahmed Chowdhury has already been appointed as the Consul General of the Maldives in Dhaka.

Mauritius, which is planning to appoint a Consul General in Dhaka has submitted a list of three prominent persons to the Foreign Ministry. The persons are: Badrul Huda Khandaker, formerly a consul for Tunisia, Farooq Ahmed Chowdhury, al-

Discontent among civil servants mounts

By S Y Bakht

Mounting discontent is brewing among the civil service cadre officials as all administrative re-organisation initiatives of the government remain ineffective and muddled in a maze of committees.

All major belligerent groupings in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) cadre are preparing to step up their agitation programmes immediately after the Eid vacation. On the other hand, the various committees entrusted with formulating a framework for administrative restructuring remain virtually inoperative due to the absence of any clear political guideline from the BNP government.

The government's slow-stepping on the issue came into sharp focus recently when it withheld the implementation of an earlier order upgrading the pay-scales of nine BCS cadres following pressure from members of rival cadres. At the

time the government had announced the formation of a 3 member committee to look into the issue. But that committee is yet to be formed.

Presently, there are four committees, including a ministerial one, working on different aspects of administrative re-organisation.

The 7-member Ministerial Committee on Administrative Re-organisation is led by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed. Earlier this month Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman was also included in the body. Formed in December last after a prolonged agitation by the Prokrichi, the committee has held only two meetings so far without making much headway.

Then there is the 5-member Secretary-level Administration Development Committee, formed a few years ago.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star talks to leaders of the BNP and AL



Salam Talukder



Zillur Rahman

In two separate interviews, covering several hours, the Secretaries of the party in power and the major opposition party talked candidly to a team of Star reporters about the current political challenges, the parliamentary impasse, problems within their respective parties, the city corporation polls, the next general elections and questions relating to party reorganisation and future directions.

See details of the interviews on Page 4.

Multi-million dollar fish stocking project backfires

Star Report

A multi-million dollar fish stocking project in the country has turned out to be a major ecological disaster because of wrong policy decisions of the government, environmental experts claimed.

Unplanned use of a poison — Rotanin — has severely damaged the indigenous fish species in 1600 hectares of the Second Aqua-Culture Project of the Directorate of Fisheries (DOF), they said.

As a result, the development of fisheries in greater Mymensingh and Sylhet districts has been hampered further increasing the misery of the poor fishermen, the experts pointed out.

The Asian Wetland Bureau has already warned against the use of poison in the haors and beels wide waterbodies which might destroy the biomass of the project areas.

Funded by the Asian Development Bank, the aim of the project is to introduce carp variety of fish in the natural waterbodies.

Talking to The Daily Star, See Page 12 Col 7



Eid Mubarak

The Daily Star wishes its valued readers and patrons a very happy Eid-ul-Fitr.

Eid holidays begin

By Staff Correspondent

If the Shawal moon is sighted this evening, Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated in the country tomorrow (Monday). If not, Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on Tuesday.

The National Moon Sighting Committee will meet at the Islamic Foundation office this evening. The committee has urged the public to inform it of the sighting of the moon from any part of the country.

After a month of fasting, Muslims celebrate Eid throughout the world with due

See Page 12 Col 4

Abahani lift Charms Cup in Calcutta

Sports Reporter

First, it was the total defection of the Sixth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games football tournament last December. Then, the ICC Trophy cricket championship in Kenya last month. Local sports lovers really needed something to lift their spirits from the morass of dreary disappointment. And Abahani Krira Chakra, one of the two giants of the country's football arena, gave them that booster by clinching the Charms Cup, defeating Calcutta Mohammedan Spor-

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Saifur tells US State Dept

Privatisation of state-owned enterprises continues

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman informed a US State Department official that privatisation of state-owned enterprises in Bangladesh was continuing with the government providing a safety net for the workers in the labour reorganisation process, reports UNB.

Saifur met Robin Raphael, Assistant Secretary of the South Asia Bureau, the US State Department, in Washington on Friday and apprised her of the economic reforms in Bangladesh, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Raphael said she was well aware of the progress made by Bangladesh in economic reforms but wished to know the current stage that Bangladesh had reached in the reform programme.

Replying to a query of the US Assistant Secretary, the Finance Minister said Bangladesh government was doing everything possible for assisting the labourers. In addition to normal benefits of provident fund and pension, retrenched workers are getting one month's salary for each year of service subject to certain ceilings, he added.

He further informed her that the government would provide the labourers with loans for projects without collateral in order to assist them in investment.

Facilities for retraining jute sector workers, particularly for the textile industry, was also available, he further said. Credit for trade-related activities, such as fertiliser distribution, was also provided.

"Bangladesh has one of the most successful structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes among all developing countries in this region," the Finance Minister told Raphael.

The Finance Minister apprised the Assistant Secretary that the present government of Bangladesh wished to create hospitable environment on which economy could grow with investment from the private sector.

Bangladeshi Taka has already been made convertible on the current account and for trade purposes. Banking reforms is also taking place, he added. On the other hand, Bangladesh was far ahead of the GATT targets for liberalisation.

Raphael praised the coura-

Ensure people's fundamental rights: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to take a renewed vow to ensure people's fundamental rights by felling all conspiracies, reports UNB.

In a message on the occasion of the 78th anniversary of birth of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 17, she said, he had dreamt of an exploitation-free "Sonar Bangla" where people would get food, clothes, shelter, education and a better life.

With this mission in life, the Awami League President said, Sheikh Mujib had led the country to achieve her independence. In this context, she recalled his declaration that The Bengali is a nation of heroes. No force in the world could trample us.

She said Mujib's leadership was unparalleled during the struggles against the Britishers in the subcontinent and the Pakistani military juntas for

China rejects US interference on HR

BEIJING, Mar 12: China bluntly told US Secretary of State Warren Christopher to day that outsiders had no business pressing it on human rights or linking that issue to trade, reports Reuters.

Vital talks between Christopher and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen got underway on a harsh note. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wujianmin, briefing reporters following Christopher's opening four-hour meeting with Qian, said the Chinese minister had accused the United States top human-rights envoy, Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck, of violating both good manners and Chinese law by meeting last month with

leading dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Shattuck was in Beijing preparing for Christopher's visit, which is expected to be crucial in determining whether the United States renews China's most favoured nation (MFN) trade privileges later this year.

"When a senior US administration official came to China to prepare for the visit he took actions which constituted interference in China's internal affairs without regard to Chinese law," Wu quoted Qian as telling Christopher.

"When US visitors come to China they should show respect for their Chinese hosts and abide by Chinese laws," he said.

He said Wei was a criminal who was still on parole when he met Shattuck.

Clinton has said he would only renew MFN if China achieved "significant overall progress" in human rights. Denying MFN would effectively close US markets to Chinese goods, depriving Beijing of one third of its exports.

But Wu said China was "firmly opposed to the practise of linking non-trade issues to trade."

Christopher was supposed to see Prime Minister Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin later today.

But reflecting the tension surrounding his visit, the Chinese abruptly changed the venue of his meeting with Li

and postponed the Jiang talks until Sunday, US officials said.

Demonstrating its disdain for Christopher's human-rights message, China detained or harassed several prominent dissidents in the days before his arrival, prompting Christopher to express "deep distaste" for Chinese actions.

Far from improving its performance, China was actually moving in the wrong direction, he told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday.

The Chinese regard US pressure on human rights as an affront to their national pride, a sentiment Wu made crystal clear in his briefing.

"There is a saying in China that courtesy calls for reciprocity," he said.

Eid Mubarak

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