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NEWS BRIEFS

Welcome rain in city
By Staff Correspondent

Intermittent drizzles in the late afternoon yesterday brought a welcome relief to the citizens of Dhaka by cooling the Chaitra heat.

The rain and gusty winds sent people hurrying to their homes, leaving the streets relatively empty.

The downpour came about an hour before the rise of the last full moon ringing out the Bengali fourteenth century.

HSC exams from Aug 1

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination of 1994 under all the four education boards — Dhaka, Comilla, Rajshahi and Jessore — will begin from August 1 instead of June 15. The schedule for the examinations will be announced later, a PID handout said here yesterday.

JU senate polls today

By JU Correspondent

The elections to the Jahanagar University registered graduate senate posts will be held today at the National Press Club. Two panels are contesting for the 25 posts of the 91-member JU Senate.

Lal Sabuj sued

Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan has filed a case against the Bengali daily 'Lal Sabuj' published from Dhaka with the Press Council, reports BSS.

BAU admission tests Apr 12

MYMENSINGH, Mar 27: The admission tests for the first year bachelor degree-courses for the session 1993-94 under six faculties of the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) will be held April 12 next, reports BSS.

AL, JP express dismay

EC declares Kazi Kamal elected

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) has announced the official results of the by-election in the Magura-2 JS constituency, declaring the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) candidate Kazi Salimul Huq Kamal elected.

The gazette notification in this regard was published yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdur Rouf has fixed March 29 for the hearing of an appeal made yesterday by the Awami League (AL) nominee

Shafiqzaman Bachhu, who had requested the EC to declare the polls null and void.

Shafiqzaman, according to the results published both unofficially and officially, was the winner's nearest contestant in the by-election held on March 20.

Although the AL lodged complaints with the EC alleging rigging in the elections by the ruling party, it did not make any formal appeal earlier to declare the results void.

However, the appeal made by K S Nabi, Bar-at-Law on be-

half of the AL nominee yesterday morning, requested the EC not to publish the gazette notification approving the unofficial results declared by the returning officer on March 20 midnight.

Alleging that the polls were rigged by the ruling party, the appeal urged the CEC to announce the elections void and prayed for a fresh date for polling in the constituency.

The CEC, while commenting on the appeal submitted yesterday, said it was 'too late' See Page 12 Col 1

Polling held duly: Rouf

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, in an order issued yesterday, said the polling in the Magura by election had been completed in accordance with the rules, reports UNB.

The order of the CEC explaining the situation in the wake of allegations by opposition political parties of rigging was based on reports of the officials engaged in conducting the polls and 26 magistrates deputed to oversee the fairness of the voting.

The reports did not reflect that the voting was held in violation of the rules. See Page 12 Col 6

AL demonstration

The Awami League will stage a protest rally and demonstration in front of its central office today at 4 pm to protest the publication of official result of Magura-2 parliamentary by-election.

Incessant rain in Sylhet

Bridge washed away, rail link snapped

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 27: Incessant rainfall and the onrush of water from the hills washed away a rail bridge near Shayestaganj Saturday, disrupting train communication between Sylhet and the rest of the country. The flash flooding is threatening the most of the greater Sylhet region.

Low-lying areas of all 11 thanas of Sylhet district and many in the districts of Maulvibazar, Habiganj and Sunamganj have been inundated due to the onrush of water from the adjoining hills across the border in India. All major rivers in the region also recorded sharp rises.

Railway officials said a 25-metre bridge between the

Montala and Itakhola villages in Shayestaganj under Habiganj district collapsed at around 10 pm Saturday due to heavy rainfall and the onrush of water.

Normal train services with Dhaka and Chittagong were disrupted but railway officials said that limited services were being offered through transshipments to and from Shayestaganj.

The local Met office recorded 199 millimeters of rainfall in Sylhet during the 36-hour period upto 6 pm Sunday.

Standing boro paddy on more than two lakh acres had gone under water in the region. See Page 12 Col 1

PM leaves for Japan

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia left Dhaka late last night on a five-day state visit to Japan.

The visit, at the invitation of her Japanese counterpart Morihiro Hosokawa, is being viewed by diplomatic observers as very significant for further strengthening the close bilateral ties between the two nations.

Tokyo, which had been especially supportive of Dhaka right from the independence of the country, has been constantly extending economic assistance to Bangladesh and See Page 12 Col 4

Cabinet approves memorandum for Aid Group meet

The Cabinet yesterday approved the Memorandum for Bangladesh Aid Group 1994-95 meeting, to be held in Paris April 18-20, reports UNB. The approval was given in a special cabinet meeting held at the International Conference Centre with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Taka devalued again

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank has once again devalued the Taka by 12 paisa to a dollar with immediate effect from yesterday, according to Finance Ministry sources.

The Bangladesh Bank's buying rate for one US dollar will now be Tk 40.15 and the selling rate Tk 40.35.

This is the fourth time the government has devalued the currency this year. The last devaluation was done on February 24 this year by six paisa to a dollar. See Page 12 Col 8



A smart contingent of soldiers during the Independence and National Day parade at the National Parade Square in the city Saturday. —Star photo

Hardrock mining accord signed

Star Report

The contract for implementation of the Madhyapara hardrock mining project was signed between Bangladesh and North Korea yesterday in Dhaka. The executives of Petrobangla and South-South Cooperation Corporation (Nam Nam) of North Korea signed the accord.

North Korea will provide a fund of about Taka 522.61 crore as supplier's credit for the Taka 697-crore turn-key project while Petrobangla will bear the rest of the cost.

According to Petrobangla sources, the loan will be repaid in 13 years after a two-year grace period from the earnings of the sale of rocks and also through barter with North Korea.

The implementation of the project, expected to begin by May this year, will create job opportunities for about six

thousand workers. The draft of the contract between the two sides was initiated on December 16 last on the basis of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in Pyongyang in December 1992.

The hardrock mine was discovered in 1974 at a depth of 135 metres at Madhyapara in Dinajpur by the geologists of Bangladesh while the mining project was approved by the ECNEC in 1978.

The extraction period of the mine has been estimated at 30 years, initially. About 16.5 lakh tonnes of hardrock can be extracted every year. The project will need six-and-a-half years to go for full production. However, partial extraction will be possible within four years.

The hardrock of Madhyapara will be used for the

construction of dams, embankments, bridges, roads, railway tracks and buildings. According to Petrobangla, the Madhyapara stones will also be helpful for the Jamuna multi-purpose bridge. Granite, also available from the mine, could be exported.

The contract is the second of its kind after the signing of a similar accord with China for the Barapukuria coal mine project recently.

Abdul Jalil Khan, Secretary, Petrobangla and Kang Hae-Bong, Director in-charge of Nam Nam, signed the contract.

Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, North Korean Ambassador Chang Won-Sik and other high officials of the Bangladesh government were present on the occasion.

Hailstorm, rain paralyse Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 27: A two-hour hailstorm this evening paralysed normal life here.

Some trees were uprooted and roofs of thatched houses blown off during the hailstorm. Almost half of Chittagong city was plunged into darkness when power supply was cut off following the storm.

Earlier, a heavy shower last night triggered flash flood in most of the low-lying areas of the city.

Met office sources said, the rainfall was accompanied with a gusty wind at a speed of 92 km per hour.

The gusty wind disconnected three foreign ships anchored at the jetties, port officials said.

Rain water entered the port sheds causing damage to cargo, officials said.

B Observer director Khaled stabbed in city

By Staff Correspondent

Khaled Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, a director of The Bangladesh Observer, was grievously stabbed by some gangsters at his residence in the city early yesterday.

An armed gang barged into Khaled's Green Road Nirala House residence at around two in the morning and stabbed him on his head, right and back before fleeing the scene.

Khaled, 54, is the only son of late Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, founder of The Bangladesh Observer, an English language daily.

See Page 12 Col 7

Fresh agitation for Sylhet Div from Apr

By Asiuzzaman, back from Sylhet

Some 7.5 million people of the greater Sylhet region are planning a new phase of agitation from next month to realise their demand of an administrative division.

According to sources, the agitators plan to barricade the road in Madhabpur, the gateway to greater Sylhet, on Wednesday (March 30) and hold a rally to announce the next course of action.

As part of the previously announced programme they would, however, boycott See Page 12 Col 7

Govt will be forced to scrap Magura polls results: Hasina

Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the ruling BNP for its failure and inefficiency in running the country and demanded immediate parliamentary elections under a neutral caretaker government, reports UNB.

Addressing a big public meeting at the Habiganj Stadium yesterday afternoon, the Awami League president accused the government of indulging in corruption, nepotism, terrorism and vote-buying.

She reaffirmed her demand for fresh election in Magura-2 parliamentary seat and warned that the government would be forced to scrap the by-election results by laying siege at the Secretariat on April 7, said a party press release last night.

"Awami League's victory was snatched away through vote-buying. BNP resorted to massive rigging to win the by-election after its debacle in the city corporation polls," Hasina said.

She alleged that the ruling party had robbed the people of their voting rights by letting loose the terrorists who did not allow the voters to cast ballots (in Magura by-election).

The BNP has failed to institutionalise democracy. This failure of the ruling party put democracy at a stake." See Page 12 Col 3

47th Branch

MIRPUR DHAKA

Another addition to the AB Bank's expanding network. Our 47th branch goes into operation from Today, the 28th March 1994.

Our clients can now see AB Bank expertise at work at our new branch at 5A-B Darus Salam main road, Mirpur, Dhaka.

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