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NEWS BRIEFS

Speaker visits
 Samad Azad

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali last night visited Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, who is now undergoing treatment at the PG Hospital. The Speaker stayed with him for some time and enquired about his health and treatment, reports BSS.

Five-taka coin
 on JMB soon

SYEDABAD (Sirajganj), Apr 10: A Five-taka coin depicting the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge (JMB) on its one side will soon be issued in commemoration of the historic event. This was told by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at the foundation-laying ceremony of the Jamuna Bridge here today, reports BSS.

40 feared drowned
 in Punjab

NEW DELHI, Apr 10: A tractor-trailer packed with villagers fell into an irrigation canal in Punjab state Sunday and at least 40 persons were feared killed, a news agency reported. Divers recovered 25 bodies from the canal in Bhera village of Gurdaspur district after the driver lost control of the vehicle, press Trust of India reported quoting police officer G S Bains, says AP.

Int'l seminar on
 folk arts begins

A three-day international seminar on folk arts and crafts and a three-week long national handicraft exhibition began at the Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday evening. Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali inaugurated the seminar and the exhibition. Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar attended the function as special guest. A total of six sessions will be held today which will start at 9 am, reports BSS.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia offering 'munajat' after unveiling the plaque of the foundation stone of the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge at Syedabad in Sirajganj yesterday. Her cabinet colleagues and representatives of the donor agencies are seen on her left.

— Star photo

JMB symbol of hope: PM

By Asiuzzaman

SHYAMSHOIL, Kalihati, Tangail, Apr 10: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today unveiled the foundation stone of the long-cherished Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge, the first step towards integrating the development of the country's eastern and western regions.

The Jamuna bridge is not just a bridge. It is a bridge of progress for the whole country. It symbolises the confluence of the hopes and aspirations of the entire nation," the Prime Minister said unveiling stone of the biggest-ever civil engineering project of the country.

Immediately before the fes-

tive but formal occasion here in Shyamshoil, 27 miles from Tangail near Bhuapur, Begum Zia unveiled a similar plaque on the other bank of the mighty Jamuna, at Syedabad, six miles from Sirajganj town.

Yesterday's historic foundation-laying ceremony was the outcome of years of strenuous efforts by the Government of Bangladesh. During the period, multiple studies at macro and micro levels were made to ascertain the feasibility and economic worth of the 696 million US dollar project.

The 4.8 km long and 18.5m wide four-lane bridge will have provisions for metre-gauge railway track, power, gas and

"I am extremely happy and

proud to be associated with this bridge", Begum Zia, wearing a pink chiffon saree with a matching chador told an audience of more than 35 thousand people amid thundering cheers.

The Prime Minister said that the foundation-laying of the Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge is a truly memorable event in the history of Bangladesh.

"It is a milestone in the development endeavours of the country," she said. This bridge has been a cherished dream of our people for a long time and today this dream is going to become a reality."

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, who is also the chairman of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMDA), Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, World Bank resident representative in

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Shyamshoil Chor from where the main approach road of the 47-span bridge would start.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, who is also the chairman of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMDA), Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, World Bank resident representative in

Braving the cruel Chaitra sun, a large crowd thronged the desert-like venue in Shyamshoil Chor from where the main approach road of the 47-span bridge would start.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, who is also the chairman of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMDA), Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, World Bank resident representative in

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina said the people, by their all-out and spontaneous response to yesterday's countrywide hartal, had demonstrated their anger, hatred and no-confidence against the 'corrupt, vote dacoit' and terrorist' BNP regime, reports UNB.

She thanked the people for making a success of the dawn-to-dusk hartal to protest the 'massive rigging by the BNP in the Magura by-election, 'barbaric' acts of the police and BNP terrorists on the 7th April peaceful siege of the Secretariat resulting in killings and to demand elections under a caretaker government.

In a post-hartal statement

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SAFTA talks in Male may prove fruitless

By Sohel Manzur

The arrangement for preferential trade among the South Asian states is unlikely to make any tangible progress in the forthcoming meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) since one member country still appears reluctant to accept the trade deal.

The two-day IGG meeting, which was earlier scheduled to be held in Islamabad, will begin on April 23 in the Maldives capital Male.

All the SAARC member countries except Pakistan and the Maldives have exchanged among themselves the lists of commodities, which they are interested to export under the South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAFTA) to particular countries.

Because of such considerations it may be taking its time to decide to what extent it would involve itself with the SAFTA, the official observed.

The countries have also exchanged necessary information related to duty and tariffs in respect of the particular commodities.

The fourth IGG meeting was, however, supposed to give the request lists or the list of

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Azizul Hoq MP dead

Azizul Hoq, a Member of Parliament and joint secretary-general of the BNP died of a heart attack at Suhrawardy Hospital in the city yesterday afternoon. He was 63, reports BSS.

The namaz-e-Janaza of Hoq will be held at 9 am in front of the party central office today.

The Janaza will also be held in front of the Rupali Bank head office at 10 am and at the Sangsab Bhaban premises at 11 am today.

His body will be taken to his home district Bogra where the namaz-e-Janaza will be held at 2 pm today. Last Janaza will be held after Asr prayers at his village home Kahal where the mortal remains will be buried at his family graveyard.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas went to see the body of Hoq at his Dhanmondi residence yesterday evening.

He stayed there for some time and consoled the members of the family.

Expressing his deep shock and sorrow he said Hoq was a devoted parliamentarian and a social worker who had always

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She thanked the people for making a success of the dawn-to-dusk hartal to protest the 'massive rigging by the BNP in the Magura by-election, 'barbaric' acts of the police and BNP terrorists on the 7th April peaceful siege of the Secretariat resulting in killings and to demand elections under a caretaker government.

In a post-hartal statement

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Utilisation of foreign aid

More power for project chiefs

By Inam Ahmed

The government has recently increased the powers of the Project Implementation Directors (PID) for ensuring smooth and speedy utilisation of foreign aid.

The PIDs have been delegated more administrative and financial powers so that the officials in charge of development projects do not have to rely heavily on the line ministries for each and every decision, sources in the Planning Ministry said.

It has also been decided to keep the PIDs in their project areas for a longer period because their frequent transfers hamper the implementation of projects.

The slow pace of project implementation had long been a cause of concern for the resource-poor country which now depends on foreign aid for up to 66 per cent of its Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Despite the directive that the IMED will provide the take component and the ERD project aid component, excluding the non-ADP component and special account provision, the IMED is still supplying reports on project implementation

based on the information given by line agencies.

Sources say, the donors taking on the low rate produced by the IMED have been criticising the government for the slow implementation of projects.

During the preparation of this year's country economic memorandum (CEM), the World Bank had pointed out the discrepancy between the two reports produced by the IMED and the ERD.

As per the IMED report, foreign aid of Tk 6500 crore was utilised last year while the Bank's estimate was Tk 7000 crore and the ERD's Tk 7300 crore.

Moreover, the IMED's six-monthly report for the current fiscal year shows only 24 per cent implementation rate while the ERD's estimate was 31 per cent.

"The government's information collection on expenditure must be coordinated rightly," a high Finance Ministry source said. "Unless this is done, the implementation rate will be wrong evoking unjust criticism from the donors," he added.

FIXTURE OF THE ROUNDS

ROUND STARTS ENDS

Quiz 1	1 April '94	10 April '94
Quiz 2	11 April '94	20 April '94
Quiz 3	21 April '94	30 April '94
Quiz 4	1 May '94	10 May '94
Quiz 5	11 May '94	20 May '94
Quiz 6	21 May '94	20 June '94

ANSWERS MUST REACH BY

14 April '94
23 April '94
3 May '94
13 May '94
23 May '94
23 June '94

LUCKY DRAW FOR PRIZES

17 April '94
24 April '94
4 May '94
14 May '94
24 May '94
24 June '94

YOU MAY SEND AS MANY ENTRIES AS YOU LIKE.

Remember, envelopes must be marked "STAR QUIZ"

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Hartal paralyses life

By Staff Correspondent
 polls after the resignation of
 the BNP government.

According to reports from
 different places of the country,
 the 6am-to-6pm hartal was ob-
 served almost peacefully, bar-
 ring stray incidents.

During the hartal hours, the
 capital Dhaka looked deserted
 with all modes of transport off
 the roads