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NEWS BRIEFS

PM to address meet in Nilphamari

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at the Gonnati football ground in Domar thana of Nilphamari district at 10:30 am today. Begum Zia will also attend a grand national conference of Rural Doctor's Association at Bogra Medical College at 3:30 pm. Later, she will inaugurate the newly constructed Bogra Circuit House, reports UNB.

Minister returns

Commerce Minister M Shamul Islam, returned home yesterday after attending the Uruguay Round trade talks at Marrakesh, reports BSS.

DESA snaps 33 power lines

TONGI, Apr 19: The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) in two separate mobile drives on Saturday and Monday last snapped 33 illegal power connections, nabbed four illegal power users and seized a substantial amount of electric accessories, reports BSS.

Serbs overrun UN arms depot, continue shelling

SARAJEVO, Apr 19: Bosnian Serbs further humiliated the United Nations Tuesday, pounding civilians in Gorazde with a devastating artillery barrage and storming a UN weapons depot to seize 18 anti-aircraft guns, reports AP.

In a bold display of military supremacy, some 100-150 armed Serbs raided Lukavica barracks in Sarajevo, taking back some of the heavy weapons they had turned in when a NATO threat of air strikes forced them to withdraw guns from around Sarajevo.

The 30 French peacekeepers at the depot simply couldn't defend the weapons, said UN peacekeepers spokesman Maj. Eric Chaperon.

"They were simply overrun," he said. "If they had fired, it would have been a massacre."

In eastern Bosnia, Serbs shelled civilians and UN buildings in Gorazde at will overnight and Tuesday morning in an assault that UN officials called one of the worst of Bosnia's two-year war.

The attacks came despite renewed pledges by Bosnian

Serb leaders to ceasefire and allow the deployment of UN troops in Gorazde, home to 65,000 mostly Muslim residents and refugees.

"The reports we're getting from Gorazde talk about more human misery and more civilian casualties than any place we've ever had," in Bosnia, said Sylvana Foa, a spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for refugees.

"The town is at their mercy," the UN commander for Bosnia, Lt Gen Sir Michael

Rose, said Monday. "We are on the edge of a major humanitarian catastrophe."

With Bosnia Serbs growing more defiant, President Clinton Tuesday considered a range of military and diplomatic steps for dealing with the renewed aggression, including the possibility of broadening the use of NATO air power.

Clinton met for two hours with top national security advisers to discuss the turmoil in Bosnia and the siege on Gorazde, which the United



Hindu devotees taking holy dips in the Old Brhmanputra at Langalbandh in Narayanjanj on the occasion of Astami Snan yesterday. — Star photo

Inkatha to contest next week's polls

PRETORIA, Apr 19: South Africa's political leaders on Tuesday agreed to a deal bringing Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's separatist Inkatha Freedom Party into next week's first all-race elections, reports Reuters.

"It is my deepest hope that this agreement will bring to an end the violence in our country," President F W de Klerk told a news conference flanked by Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi and ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

Mandela said the whole country, including the overwhelming majority of South Africa's 8.5 million Zulus, wanted to take part in the election.

"This agreement is a leap forward for peace, recon-

ciliation, nation-building and inclusive election process," said Mandela, tipped to become South Africa's first Black President.

"We are one country, we are one people — African."

As part of the agreement parliament will reconvene on Monday to authorise constitutional changes reinforcing the position of Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, who has demanded virtual sovereignty for the Zulus in post-apartheid South Africa.

Buthelezi told the news conference: "I am pleased to announce that the Inkatha Freedom Party will contest elections at the national and provincial level."

He said South Africa may

Astami snan concludes at Langalbandh

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 19: The traditional Astami snan or holy bath of the Hindu community concluded today at 2:50 pm at Langalbandh, 13 km from Dhaka on the bank of the old Brahmaputra under Narayanjanj Bandar thana.

About three lakh Hindu devotees from across the country as well as India, Nepal and the USA took part in the ritualistic bathing which, for hundreds of years, has been believed to cure all kinds of maladies.

Devotees believe Hindus have been taking this holy bath at this place for thousands of years.

The auspicious time for the holy dip in the river commenced at 3 am Monday

Find alternative to hartal, shopowners urge Hasina

Leaders of shopowners' associations yesterday pleaded with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina for finding an alternative to hartal which badly affects their business, reports UNB.

A delegation of the Federation of Bangladesh Shopowners' Associations, which met the opposition leader at her official residence, also requested Sheikh Hasina to be a chief guest at a seminar on 'alternative to hartal,' they proposed to organise soon.

The Awami League has called for another countrywide hartal on April 26.

The Federation leaders had recently called on Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and pleaded for banning hartal to safeguard the interest of the business community and the country's economy.

The delegation, led by the Federation chairman Amir Hossain Khan, included leading shopkeepers from Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Bogra, Dinajpur, Tangail, Chuadanga and Sylhet.

A press release of the Federation said the delegation apprised Sheikh Hasina of the adverse impact of strikes on business as well as of financial losses to shopowners.

They urged the opposition leader to lend her support to their five-point demands including credit from banks to the extent of possession value of the shop.

The press release further said that the Awami League leader gave a patient hearing to the shopowners and held the government responsible for the business loss caused by recession during the last three years.

PM tells Bhandari Water sharing main irritant in ties

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the sharing of the Ganges water is the main irritant in the Indo-Bangla relations that calls for an early solution, reports UNB.

"If we could solve the main problem, it would have been easier for us to resolve other problems," she told visiting Governor of the Indian State of Tripura Romesh Bhandari who called on her at the PM's office in the afternoon.

Begum Zia recalled Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's assurance to settle the Farakka problem during her visit to India in 1992 and during the last SAARC Summit.

"We are eagerly waiting for Prime Minister Rao's visit to Bangladesh," she said and hoped that Bangladesh would get her due share of the Ganges water as an outcome of his visit.

"Further delay will only complicate the problem. It's better to resolve the problems as early as possible," Begum Zia said.

She said her government sincerely wants to bolster the existing friendly relations with the neighbours.

Referring to the rehabilitation of tribal refugees, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her

AL, JP gherao offices of the DCs today

Awami League will gherao the office of the district administration throughout the country today as part of its agitation mainly for realising the demand for election under a neutral caretaker government, reports UNB.

The largest opposition party is also asking the government to scrap all black laws, including the Anti-Terrorism Act, give autonomy to radio and television, pass the Separation of Judiciary Bill and the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill, take effective parliamentary steps against corruption and set up a separate parliamentary secretariat.

Most of the central leaders and MPs of Awami League have left for different districts to lead the gherao programme. The party leaders are expected to submit to the Deputy Commissioners memorandum containing their demands.

In the capital, Dhaka City

Awami League will stage gherao at the DC office at 10 am. Party's city leaders will lead the programme.

Jatiya Party has also planned gherao of the district administration today to press for release of its Chairman Ershad, to protest 'vote dacoity' in Magura by-election, resignation of the government and holding election under a caretaker government.

Another report says, Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of "unwarrantedly interfering" in different development projects on schools and colleges.

Some 2076 secondary schools and higher secondary educational institutions were enlisted under the development projects financed from the revenue budget and by the Asian Development Bank

Jamaat to attend opposition meet today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh is to attend a meeting of the combined Opposition parties in Parliament scheduled today to finalise a common political strategy against the ruling BNP, a senior Jamaat leader said.

"Mr Samad Azad phoned and requested us to send a representative so we have decided to send one," the Jamaat leader told The Daily Star by telephone. Sheikh Anser Ali, MP is likely to be the Jamaat representative.

The meeting will start at 11

JP to boycott polls under BNP

The Jatiya Party yesterday charged the BNP government with failure to run the country and asked it to hand over power to a caretaker government for holding national elections, reports UNB.

"The Jatiya Party will not take part in any future election under this government," acting Chairman of JP Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury told a public meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the afternoon.

Referring to BNP ministers' logic that there is no constitutional provision for holding election under caretaker gov-

Demolition of tilted bldg to begin today

By Staff Correspondent

The demolition of the tilted six-storey Meghna Hotel at Shantinagar in the city is expected to begin today.

Due to its own faulty design and unauthorised pile-driving at an adjacent plot for a multi-storied building, the Meghna Hotel tilted almost 15 degrees or two and a half feet Sunday night.

The owner has engaged a private firm to demolish the building which is threatening the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, the real estate company Eastern Housing Ltd and the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) have jointly finished filling the dug up construction site on the adjacent plot to stop the

Meghna building from collapsing.

The RAJUK has also formed a number of teams to identify unauthorised and technically faulty buildings in the city, according to an order of the Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah.

These teams would visit households in the metropolitan areas and check the authorised designs of the buildings from their owners.

RAJUK has warned owners of unauthorised buildings and ordered them to demolish all such constructions, at their own cost.

"Otherwise, the RAJUK would take steps to demolish

Teachers' strike passes second day

Teachers' strike entered the second day yesterday with no sign of ending the deadlock, reports UNB.

Neither the Education Minister nor the State Minister for Education were available in office to comment on the situation.

Teachers Central Action Liaison Committee which had called the strike from Monday claimed no classes were held yesterday in any of the private schools and colleges.

The striking teachers have been demanding equal benefits and facilities enjoyed by the government schools and colleges and security of job.

Meanwhile, the National Guardians' Association has expressed concern at the indefinite strike by the private school teachers.

In a press statement yesterday the association urged the teachers community to consider the ability of the government to fulfil their present demands.

Aid Club meet begins

A two-day meeting of the International Aid Club for Bangladesh began yesterday in Paris, according to a message received in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman is leading the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting. Representatives from 20 donor countries and agencies are participating.

They will review the economic performance of Bangladesh and make fresh aid commitments for fiscal 1994-95.

Last year, Bangladesh secured an aid pledge of 2.1 billion US dollars.

Row over debate result Scuffle at TV Bhaban leaves 3 students hurt

By DMCH Correspondent

At least three students of the Dhaka University were injured at the Rampura Television centre following the conclusion of a national students' debate recording yesterday afternoon.

The three victims — Mrinal, Buddhanath Saha and Badal — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday evening.

Sabujbagh police and witnesses said that a row began among the students and members of the audience and TV personnel over the result of the TV debate between the girls of Mannujan Hall of Rajshahi University and the

Students protest death of mate, damage vehicles

By Staff Correspondent

Students demonstrated in the Dhaka University and Farnigate areas yesterday morning damaging quite a few vehicles following the death of a college student.

Three students of the Dhaka College and the Government Science College were severely beaten up at the Fazul Huq Hall Monday afternoon. Mithu, a student of the Science College, succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) late Monday night.

Police arrested one Dhaka University student — Masud — late last night following the death of Mithu.

Students of Fazul Huq Hall protested the arrest and clashed with police around

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