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NEWS BRIEFS

DDA Director meets Rafiq

Housing and Public Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia was apprised yesterday of the development and planning of the Indian capital city by R G Gupta, Director of the Delhi Development Authority. During his meeting with the minister at his office here, Gupta told him how the DDA has been working to solve the accommodation problem in Delhi, reports UNB.

Bahais celebrate Eid-i-Ridwan

The Bahai Community, Dhaka, yesterday celebrated Eid-i-Ridwan 131st anniversary of Declaration of Baha'u'llah at Bahai's centre. In observance of the day, speakers in a meeting emphasised the need to shun all kinds of prejudice and called to unite for building a better world, reports UNB.

Nor'westers claim six lives, injure 330

By Staff Correspondent
 A series of severe *Kalbat-shakhi* storms or nor'westers claimed the lives of at least six persons and left 330 injured in the city and different parts of the country yesterday.
 In the capital four persons died yesterday. Babul, 24, a carpenter fell on the Mirpur Road from the roof of Jahan Mansion where he was working during the storm. He was killed on the spot.
 Another unidentified person was killed when a live electric cable at the T&T Colony premises snapped and fell on him during the storm.
 According to police sources, two others were electrocuted in the city because of the storm. Ruhul Amin Ratan, 14, of Mandra School was killed when he came in contact with a live wire in a residential area in Sabujbag, Jahangir, another 10-year-old, died in Ashkona of Uttara thana.
 Three persons were injured in Jurain yesterday. They are Badsha, 20, Khaled, 30, and Abul Khair, 20. One Mahbubul Haq, 25, was injured in the Farmgate area.
 Two others — a rickshaw-puller, Ratan, 35 and Tutul, 18, who were injured during Wednesday's nor'wester in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), succumbed to their injuries at the hospital yesterday.
 Both were taking tea at a roadside tea stall when a tree fell on them, killing two others on the spot.
 The first nor'wester hit the capital yesterday at around 11:45 am with a wind speed of 50 km per hour while the second struck at 3:30 pm with a wind speed of 70km per hour, according to the Met Office.
 Rain continued to fall for most of the time since 12 noon. The Met Office recorded 48 mm of rainfall in the city from 6 am to 6 pm.
 Trees were uprooted and scores of thatched dwellings were levelled in the afternoon's nor'wester which lasted
 See Page 12 Col 4



Even a most brief downpour turns many city roads into pools, causing immense hardship to the citizens. This photograph shows the Fakirerpool Road after yesterday's shower. — Star photo

Food procurement target fixed at 6.5 lakh tons

The formal procurement of Irri-Boro paddy will begin on May 7 and of rice from May 15. Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali said in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.
 He, however, said that with the onset of the Irri-Boro season on April 27 the government would buy foodgrains even before the procurement date if any grower wanted to sell his produce. Addressing a press conference at the Food Directorate, the Food Minister noted although the formal food procurement date is April 15, the farmers cannot deliver their crops before the month of May.
 The government has fixed the procurement price of paddy, rice and wheat at Tk 230, Tk 370 and Tk 225 per maund respectively.
 The target for procurement of paddy has been fixed at 2.50 lakh tons, that of rice also at 2.50 lakh tons and of wheat at 1.50 lakh tons for the current Irri-Boro season.
 Shawkat said the government has fixed the procurement prices at a higher rate than in previous years to give incentives to the growers who had suffered a lot due to low prices in the past.
 The procurement prices were fixed on the basis of average production cost, he said. The production cost of one maund paddy this year was calculated at Tk 210 and that of rice at Tk 360, he added.
 The minister told the newsmen that 1.96 crore tons
 See Page 12 Col 7

Minor boy kills bus conductor in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent
 NARAYANGANJ, Apr 21: A bus conductor was stabbed to death by a minor boy working at a roadside motor garage in the town.
 The victim was identified as Shaiful Islam, 26, of Deobhog area.
 Road communication between Dhaka and Narayanganj was disrupted when the transport workers protesting the killing refrained from plying buses on the route.
 The boy, Munir Hossain, 12, of the Borhanuddin motor garage allegedly stabbed Shaiful with a knife following a quarrel over a hand-stitched blanket both used to share while sleeping.

Bangladeshis can apply for visas under DV-1

By Staff Correspondent
 Bangladeshis citizens will be among the Asian nationals who will qualify for applying for US immigrant visas under the just announced rules of the DV-1 programme.
Visa guidelines on page 3
 Giving out the detailed guidelines, a USIS news release yesterday stated that the applications of the intending participants, will have to be reached within the month of June this year.
 Applications will only be received by mail at the US address beginning 12:01 am (Eastern Standard Time) on Wednesday, June 1, and will
 See Page 12 Col 6

Serb gunners ignore US move, kill 100 more in Gorazde

SARAJEVO, Apr 21: A ham radio operator reported 'hell in Gorazde' Thursday as Bosnian Serb gunners, unfazed by calls for wider NATO air strikes, pounded away at the Muslim enclave, reports AP.
 The hell in Gorazde continues, amateur radio operator Enes Musovic said in a broadcast monitored in Sarajevo.
 UN aid officials also reported more shelling as Serbs ignored a cease-fire they agreed to on Tuesday.
 AFP says: Bosnian Serb gunners battered the eastern town of Gorazde today with artillery bombardments that may have left more than 100 people dead.
 Two rockets hit a Gorazde hospital building today, killing 20 patients and visitors, the medical and charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said.
 MSF released the information after speaking with its staff in the besieged Muslim enclave.
 International aid workers pleaded for help Wednesday after at least 10 people were killed in a rocket attack on the Gorazde Hospital. UN aid officials said at least 44 people were killed Wednesday in Gorazde, 55 kilometers south-east of Sarajevo.
 In Washington, President Clinton Wednesday proposed extending the NATO air-strike umbrella around Sarajevo to all
 See Page 12 Col 7

Subcontinental duel in the desert today

Sports Reporter
 Cricketers of the bitter sub-continental neighbours India and Pakistan engage in their 40th clash in the 23-year-old history of one-day cricket as the third Australasia Cup culminates at Sharjah, UAE, today.
 Reigning one-day world champions Pakistan will start as the odds-on favourites, having won 25 previous clashes against India's 12 victories with two games being abandoned.
 Australasia Cup holders Pakistan's record at Sharjah is even more awe-inspiring. Out of the 14 meetings of the two arch-rivals Pakistan have so far won 11 ties.
 India are in search of their first victory over their neighbour.
 See Page 12 Col 8

Hartals hurt country's image abroad: Donors

By Staff Correspondent
 The donors at the just-concluded Paris Club meeting observed that frequent calling of hartals by political parties has "a particularly negative effect on Bangladesh's image as a location for foreign investment".
 This aside, they also pointed out the need for improvement of the law and order situation to attract foreign investments.
 According to information reaching Dhaka, it was also agreed that reforms in public administration are absolutely essential to remove bottlenecks in the implementation of government actions.
 Despite the country's sound macro-economic management and growing private investment response, there was a shared sense of concern at the "very slow pace of decision-making by the country's public authorities". As a result, last year's expected pace of reform had not been fulfilled and actions on specific issues that the government had highlighted have been only partial.
 It was also felt that the GDP growth for this year is unlikely to reach five per cent.
 The donors also pointed out that unless implementation of public sector reforms and investment quickens, private-sector investment will take too long to reach any significant level.
 It was felt that crucial issues for the coming year will be acceleration of the reforms process, removal of obstacles to the implementation of public investment, and further improvements in understanding between and confidence among the public sector and other major categories of economic agents.
 It was also felt that the new local government structure must be operationalised and systematic steps taken to improve the local bodies' performance in raising revenues and improving project implementation.
 Although the country was becoming less aid dependent, yet it still faced "almost overwhelming problems of poverty."
 See Page 12 Col 7

Teachers continue strike

By Staff Correspondent
 The impasse at the country's non-government schools and colleges continued for the fourth consecutive day yesterday with the teachers abstaining from their duties.
 About two lakh teachers of nearly 11,000 schools and 640 colleges in the private sector began boycotting their duties from Monday last demanding facilities and benefits equal to those enjoyed by the nationalised schools and colleges.
 The Central Action Liaison Committee of six teachers' organisations had been organising the work-stoppage across the country. Besides, the Bangladesh Teachers' Association (Ashraf-Nazrul group), a body of the secondary school teachers, also started an
 See Page 12 Col 1

Banglabazar editor arrested

By Staff Correspondent
 Matur Rahman Chowdhury, editor of the vernacular daily Banglabazar Patrika, was arrested yesterday after the chief Metropolitan Magistrate issued a warrant of arrest against him for publishing a defamatory news.
 The court also issued a warrant of arrest against the publisher of the newspaper Mohammad Zakaria Khan, who is also the Chairman of the Cosco Group of Industries, which has owned the newspaper since January last.
 M. Morshed Khan, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, lodged a complaint with CMM Sveduddin Ahmed for publishing the report under the headline: "Chairman and Vice-
 See Page 12 Col 2

Dhaka vows to improve admn, private sector

By Staff Correspondent
 The government at the Paris Club meeting, committed a number of steps to improve public administration and energeise the private sector.
 It also outlined its vision on attacking the poverty issue by making it a principal economic preoccupation in the coming year.
 The government will complete the work of the committees reviewing administrative reform and have in place, before December, 1994, a time-bound action plan of practical reforms, including personnel management and training for civil servants identified for future senior positions.
 It will also proceed with law reform, remove shortcomings and under-staffing of the judicial system and the deficiencies in legal procedures which unduly prolong the litigation process. A law reform commission will be set up and the updating of existing commercial legislation will continue.
 The government will also implement the power sector reform programme, now under preparation, with special priority to expanded role of the existing Palli Biddyt Samity and the private sector.
 Moreover, the restructuring of the BADC and the Food
 See Page 12 Col 3

BSF kidnaps Bangladeshi

JESSORE, Apr 21: Indian border guards intruded into Bangladesh territory and kidnapped a farmer from a frontier village in Sarsha thana of the district today, reports UNB.
 The BSF personnel armed with sophisticated weapons intruded Bangladesh area at about 12:30 pm and kidnapped Shahidul, 30, while going to his field, officials and villagers said.
 Being informed, BDR men along with local police chased the intruders who fled firing in the air. One of them left his SLR in Bangladesh territory, sources said.
 The kidnapped villager remained untraced.
 Another report from Lalmonirhat adds: Tension
 See Page 12 Col 3

Opening of resident mission in Uzbekistan Tashkent's silence worries Dhaka

By A Special Correspondent
 Nearly two years after it signed a protocol with the newly independent Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan to open a full-fledged embassy in the capital Tashkent and about a year after it proposed a career diplomat's name to become the first ambassador there, Bangladesh appears to have no choice but to abandon the idea — at least for now.
 "We're just getting fed-up," a Foreign Ministry official said referring to the unusual delay on the part of the Uzbek government to formally accept the agreement of the ambassador-designate Sharjil Hasan, who is now serving as the consul general in Jeddah. "We'll wait another couple of weeks and then shelve the plan."
 Furthermore, Tashkent has also not given visa to the coun-
 Apart from the United States, Russia, China and Japan, countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and India have embassies there.
 By all indications, an official said, "They're not willing to let us in at this stage," although it's not clear why.
 Some diplomatic observers say, Bangladesh has missed the opportunity as it was not prompt enough to follow other countries in gaining a quick foothold there. This was due mainly to lack of coordination at the policy-making level.
 While most of the countries opened their missions soon after Uzbekistan became independent, Bangladesh made the first direct contact only in October, 1992 when the protocol providing for the establishment of their diplomatic missions in the Uzbek capital.
 See Page 12 Col 8



Bosnian refugee children in Pakistan marching towards the French embassy in Islamabad yesterday to register their protest against Serbian aggression on their homeland. — AFP photo

Dhaka urges OIC to stop Serbian aggression

Bangladesh yesterday called on the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to take immediate steps for deterring the continued Serbian aggression on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the lone Muslim state in Europe.
 "Situation in former Yugoslavia is worsening gradually. Serbs are reported to continue to shell into the UN sanctioned safe areas and tanks are rolling through Gorazde firing into the residential area of 65,000 civilians. It is undoubtedly a matter of grave concern," said Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman.
 Condemning the killings and bloodshed in the Balkan peninsula, the worst violation of human rights in the history, Mostafizur told UNB that "all members of the OIC must sit
 See Page 12 Col 3

WIN
 See Page 11 for details

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