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Dhaka Day by Day

US, China sign accord on stopping copyright piracy

BEIJING, Feb 26: The United States and China averted a trade war here today with the signing of an eleventh hour agreement on copyright piracy, report AFP, AP.

"The United States is very satisfied with the agreement. It is a strong agreement, very detailed and comprehensive with respect to intellectual property rights protection," US Deputy Trade Secretary Charlene Barshefsky said.

Barshefsky, who signed the agreement along with China's Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Sun Zhenyu, said the agreement also "provides for market

access for US entities as well as for legitimate copyrighted products."

Washington had been set to impose 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports worth 1.08 billion dollars if no agreement was reached by a 1:00 pm (0500 GMT) US deadline.

China had vowed to retaliate with its own sanctions, including imposing 100 per cent tariffs on a range of US imports and the suspension of negotiations on new ventures in the auto, chemical and audio-visual sectors.

The chief representatives of US business in China welcomed the agreement, which

he said was 'good news for everybody.'

"We as the US business community, are very pleased by the result and the outcome of the negotiations," said the chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China William Warwick.

The agreement appeared to forestall the threat of sanctions from both sides, averting a trade war between two of the world's largest economies.

It also could contribute to removing a perennial irritant in relations between the United States and China: complaints from American businesses that they are losing

more than 1 billion dollar in business each year because of rampant theft of copyrights and trademarks.

There had been a sign of progress. The official Xinhua News Agency reported late Saturday that China ordered the shutdown of two southern factories that had been producing pirated audiovisual materials.

One was Shenfei, a factory that American movie and music industry officials identified as one of the worst piracy offenders. Shenfei made illegal copies of the movie 'Jurassic Park' and audio laser products.

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Two murdered on DU, BL College campuses

By Staff Correspondent

A youngman was gunned down on the Dhaka University campus while a leader of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was assassinated by a rival student group at the BL College in Khulna yesterday.

Our DU Correspondent reports, Shabbir Dewan, 27, was felled by a bullet in the chest near the 'Dhaka University Snacks(DUS)' in front of the TSC in the evening. He was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead.

Witnesses said a group of three youths fired three shots, one of which hit Shabbir on the left side of the chest near the heart. The cause of the shooting could not be known immediately.

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Shabbir, son of Abul Kasem Dewan of Ramna, hailed from Vikrampur.

Witnesses added that Shabbir had just got down from a car and gone to the snack bar for a glass of water.

His assailants fled the scene promptly after shooting which created panic among the students and pedestrians.

Students and DUS employees rushed Shabbir to the DMCH but it was too late.

Our Correspondent reports: The president of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Braja Lal College unit was killed when youths of a rival student group opened fire at him near the college gate yesterday afternoon.

The victim was identified as

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Lailatul Qadr tonight

By Staff Correspondent

The holy night of Lailatul Qadr will be observed by the Muslims throughout the country tonight.

The night marks the beginning of the revelation of the holy Quran.

Tomorrow is a public holiday.

In a message on the occasion, President Abdur Rahman Biswas called for renewing the pledge to build an educated, ideal and welfare society in the country.

He said the Shab-e-Qadr signifies the greatest gift from Allah as the holy Quran was revealed on this night.

In a similar message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday underscored the need for united efforts of all imbued with the teachings and ideals of Islam for building a

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While one little girl watches her mother and aunt pick some pretty bangles for her for Eid, another can only console a younger sister by showing her the pretty things on display at a city roadside shop. — Star photo

Police worried over illegal arms in city

By Masud Hasan Khan

The manufacturing and availability of illegal fire-arms is on the rise in the capital.

Several clandestine gun-making factories have been unearthed in the capital, particularly in the older part of the city.

Besides, home-made weapons such as pistols, revolvers, rifles and pipe-guns are constantly pouring in from along and across the border. On a higher level, expensive automatic and latest state-of-the-

art small weapons are being smuggled from abroad by very well-organised gangs.

Ruthless persons or groups with money and clout are using a section of impressionable youths to operate their vicious business and reap huge profits.

The socio-economic profiles of such youths or 'agents' range from daring, adventurous school or college-going teenagers and young men from the middle-class, many often suffering from a deep sense of deprivation, to ill-educated, vagrants or poorly-paid machinists or their apprentices. Instances of apparently well-educated, well-bred boys from the upper stratum of society dabbling in this dubious trade are also there.

However, it is mostly the self-taught lathe machine operators and their apprentices, working in innumerable workshops and factories across the city and in other parts of the country, who are the main men behind the actual manufacture of often crude home-made handguns and pipeguns.

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The price list

Star Report

The Daily Star attempted to collect the price tags of illegal weapons from different sources. The information was gathered from several persons engaged in the illegal arms business either as producers, dealers, suppliers or users. All of them spoke to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, insisting that neither their names nor their sources or contacts could be disclosed. The following is an

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PM addresses series of rallies in Feni

FENI, Feb 26: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here today that the country was marching towards progress due to the massive development programmes taken by the government to make Bangladesh self-reliant in all fields, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a series of spontaneous gatherings during her extensive tours to different areas of Fulgazi, Porsuram and Chhagalniya thanas of the district.

Begum Zia said the BNP government had been carrying out various socio-economic development programmes throughout the country to meet the people's expectations as well as to ensure their well-being.

During her day-long people-to-people contact in various areas of her constituency the Prime Minister talked freely with the people and enquired about their welfare.

Begum Zia extended her Eid greetings to the people of all ages. "I have come here to see you", said the Prime Minister.

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Abnormal fall in water levels making navigation difficult

Country's river traffic is facing an unprecedented difficulty due to abnormal fall in water levels of most of the rivers during the current dry season, reports UNB.

Official sources said the water level this year was down by about one metre on an average from last year's mark.

According to official statistics, the country's dry-season navigable waterways have also shrunk to 3,800 km from 5,200 km in last 10 years.

Experts in the government agencies dealing with water said riverbeds were constantly rising because of increasing siltation making the river traffic difficult particularly in the dry season.

Navigable waterways have been constantly shrinking and water vessels with higher draft are increasingly finding it difficult to move even in mighty rivers like the Padma and Jamuna between November and March.

Until now the effect has been felt only in tributaries but the impact was now gradually spreading to main rivers, said an hydrographer at the

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the agency responsible for maintaining navigability.

The rain time waterways have also declined to 6,000 km from 8,400 during the time.

An expert attributed the unexpected fall in the water level to drop in water flow from the upper riparian because of lesser melting of the Himalayan ice, besides the impact of the Farakka barrage over the Ganges.

According to reports reaching from different parts of the country, river vessels of all kinds are having tough time.

Motor launch drivers in the Sadarghat launch terminal said they are facing difficulty in almost all routes, including Dhaka-Barisal via Chandpur.

The BIWTA said it had to put in extraordinary efforts this year to keep operative the three crucial ferry routes - Aricha-Nagarbari, Aricha-Daulatdia and Sirajganj-Bhupur.

With high alertness, ferries and motor launches are moving through narrow channels,

constantly being dredged, with permitted draft limit of only 8 ft.

According to available information, the lowest water level of the Jamuna at Aricha point was recorded 3.8 metre in November, down from 4.5 during the same month of 1993. The flow in January was also much lower than what it was last year.

Plying of cargo vessels is seriously being affected in different commercially important routes, particularly in Aricha-Baghabari route where the permitted draft limit is only 6.5 ft at present.

Cargoes carrying oil and fertiliser to North Bengal usually ply through this route and a 6.5 draft limit is forcing the vessels to keep their capacity unutilised.

As the water level fell, innumerable shoals surfaced throughout almost all waterways. Increasing incidents of river accidents have been reported in recent months. The BIWTA sources, however, attributed to damage buoys and beacon lights by fishermen as

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3 MPs report on their experiences in Britain

By Staff Correspondent

A three-member parliamentary team which recently visited Britain, in a report, has recommended the downsizing of government and major reform of the civil service.

The team, headed by ruling party MP LK Siddiqui, has also recommended that the Prime Minister should first announce her policy decision in Parliament and also personally answer questions from the MPs.

The 91-page report was released in the city yesterday at the office of the Centre for Analysis and Choice, an NGO which helped in preparing and publishing the report.

The two other members of the team were Matiya Chowdhury of the Awami League and Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party. Nazim Kamran Chowdhury, a director of the centre, was also in the team which visited the UK between October 23 and November 4 last.

In the report, titled 'Making Parliament Effective - A British Experience', the authors have proposed a set of 14 recommendations drawn

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Jute sector reforms run at snail's pace

The government's ambitious three-year Jute Sector Restructuring Programme (JSRP), under a 250-million US dollar World Bank credit, is limping forward at a much slower than projected pace.

World Bank and official sources indicated that the programme is particularly stumbling with its manpower rationalisation, capacity reduction and privatisation components.

In February last year, with retrospective effect from July 1993, the Jute Sector Adjustment Credit (JSAC) is designed to revitalise the country's ailing jute sector and make it internationally competitive and viable.

Earlier this month, a World Bank mission from Washington held a review meeting of the programme with officials of the jute and finance ministries.

The Bank is expected to evaluate the progress of the programme and make its recommendations before the second tranche of the International Development Agency (IDA) credit is released in

S Y Bakht

March next.

Due to end in June 1996, the programme prescribes restructuring some Tk 4,000 crore worth of bank debt of the jute sector, capacity reduction by closing down the nine worst performing public sector jute mills, retrenching some 20,000 employees and privatising 18 state-owned jute mills.

The debt restructuring, retrenchment, capacity reduction and the privatisation of nine of the jute mills were scheduled to be completed by December last year. In addition, under the programme both private and public sector jute mills are being provided with working capital and loss financing for a limited period.

Prior to approval of the JSAC, the government closed down the operations of the Bangladesh Jute Corporation, shut down four public jute mills, downsized one large mill, retrenched 12,000 workers and issued bonds worth Tk 800 crore to compensate banks for debts of BJC.

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No alternative to agitation: JP

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party yesterday said there was no alternative to agitation to end the present political crisis through general elections under a caretaker government.

An emergency meeting of the party presidium called upon the people to intensify the agitation to compel the government to accept the opposition demand.

The meeting held with JP acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury in the chair decided to include former first lady Begum Raushan Ershad in the party presidium.

The Jatiya Party again rejected the Speaker's ruling on the resignation of opposition MPs describing it illegal and in violation of the Constitution.

In fact, the Speaker had implemented the blueprint of the government. The JP presidium condemns such action of the Speaker, the meeting resolved.

The meeting reiterated the demands for dissolution of Parliament, resignation of the government, general elections under a caretaker administration and release of former president and JP chairman

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An ambulance driver shields his face against the heat generated from a burning van in Karachi yesterday. Roving groups of militants set a Pakistan International Airlines van ablaze as sporadic unrest continued a day after 20 persons were gunned down inside two mosques in the city Saturday. — AFP photo

Troops pour into major trouble zones 10 more massacred in Karachi

KARACHI, Feb 26: Paramilitary troops and police poured onto the streets of Karachi where the massacre of 20 people in two mosques was followed by more killings today, reports AFP.

The new killings, including a Sunni Muslim cleric, took the weekend toll to more than 30 dead. More than 150 have been killed in Karachi this month.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto condemned the attacks saying she was shocked and grieved at the mosque massacres. But officials warned Karachi's troubles could spread to the rest of Pakistan.

Gunmen killed 20 worshippers in two dawn assaults on Shi'ite mosques. Shi'ites went on the rampage during funeral prayers later Saturday.

Six people were shot dead

in different incidents during the night, officials said. Apart from the Muslim cleric, three men, believed to be members of the Mohajir Qami Movement (MQM), were shot dead near a restaurant in the central district.

Two others, one a 15-year-old boy, were shot dead in separate attacks.

Police and paramilitary troops intensified patrols in Karachi's major trouble zones. Twenty thousand police and 8,000 para-militaries are in the city, which is quiet but tense today.

Witnesses said young Shi'ites, with their faces covered in black cloth, fired into the air with Kalashnikov rifles in the alleys of the populous Rizvia Society and Soldier Bazaar areas in the central and southern districts of Karachi.

The militants roamed around in cars and on motorcycles, shouting "revenge" and "blood for blood", the witnesses said.

Morning traffic was thin in Karachi's normally busy streets, with many people apparently saying home for fear of violence.

Hundreds of Shi'ite mourners visited the Mehfil-i-Murtaza Imambarah, or Shi'ite prayer hall, where masked gunmen massacred 14 worshippers at dawn on Saturday.

Haasan Abdullah Shah a caretaker, said 10 armed policemen had been on guard at the mosque all night.

Gunmen killed six Shi'ites in an attack on another Imambarah about 20 minutes before the Mehfil-i-Murtaza raid.

Princess Anne due Mar 6

Anne, Britain's Princess Royal, will arrive in Dhaka on March 6 on a four-day visit that will be mainly devoted to observing the activities of the Save the Children Fund in Bangladesh. Foreign Office sources said yesterday, reports UNB.

Princess Anne is the President of the Fund which is Britain's largest international voluntary agency, operating projects in more than 50 LDC countries in Asia, Africa and the Pacific and Caribbean regions.

The princess is scheduled to visit Parbatipur, Saidpur and Khulna where she will inspect a number of projects including a day care centre, a health care centre, children nutrition programme, slum development education for the underprivileged and fisheries projects.

The projects are run under British aid programmes.

Sehri, Iftar Timings

Ram	Feb	Sehri	Iftar
26	27	—	6:03
27	28	5:03	6:04
28	Mar 1	5:02	6:05