## Fertiliser price has come down, claims minister

The price of fertiliser has come down substantially with adequate and steady supply of the important agricultural input throughout the country.

State Minister for Industries Lutfor Rahman Khan told BSS at his office yesterday that the alternate mechanism undertaken by the government involving the district and thana administration had paid rich dividends in curbing the "artificial scarcity" created by vested quarters.

Khan said a total of about 2.32 lakh tons of fertiliser had been distributed during the month of February and March through the alternate mechanism while 12.20 lakh tons of the item distributed through traders since July '94. He said the supply of fertiliser during the current peak season (January-March) was 6.10 lakh tons as against 5.58 lakh tons during the corresponding period last year.

Replying to a question on media reports of fertiliser crisis from different parts of the country, the state minister said it was "politically motivated to tarnish the image of the government on the one hand and destroy the agroeconomy on the other."

In this context, he said, the consumption of fertiliser till March this year was 14.50 lakh tons against the total consumption of 15.84 lakh tons during 1993-94.

The state minister said the actual consumption of fertiliser in the country was 12.22 lakh tons against the projected de-

#### TNO office

From Page 1 dent that local farmers had been suffering a lot due to the price spiral of fertiliser.

Meanwhile, a group of Awami League workers ran sacked the residence of the Melandah TNO and the Melandah thana BNP office today.

They also looted valuables furniture and a telephone se during a procession protesting the death of a farmer, Kabir Hossain, in police firing earlier in the week.

In Sirajganj, at least 24 people were injured, four of them seriously, in two separate clashes over the distribution of fertiliser in Kazipur thana to-

Police said the clashes erupted between farmers and supporters of fertiliser dealers at Chalitadanga and Shimantabazar when the dealers demanded exorbitant prices for the much-needed agricultural

input. Four of the 18 injured in Chalitadanga were admitted to the Kazipur Health Complex in critical condition. The other six people were injured in the Shimantabazar clash.

Separate cases were filed with the local police.

mand of 15.50 lakh tons during 1990-91 while the consumption was 15.58 lakh tons against the demand of 16 lakh tons during 1991-92. The consumption of the item was 15.05 lakh tons against the projected demand of 16.20 lakh tons during 1992-93, he

In this context he dwelt at length on the background of privatisation of the fertiliser distribution system since

1989. He said prior to privati sation Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) was responsible for the distribution through its countrywide network.

He said the price of fertiliser had been twice reduced and sold at Tk 3725 per ton against the previous price of Tk 4725 to ensure its delivery to the consumers at maximum retail price of Tk 230 per 50 kg bag. Unfortunately, Khan said,

some unscrupulous traders had created artificial scarcity in the markets compelling the government to intervene. The measures adopted by the government, he said, has proved very effective in restoring normalcy in distribution of the item. He said some transports of the army were also used to ensure quick disposal of fertilisers to the country's remotest corners. The state minister was

sharply critical of a section of political parties for what has been described as their design to use "fertiliser scarcity" to serve their political interests instead of extending the hand of cooperation to the government in handling the situation He said they had given programmes like road blockade. gherao, hartals and siege for 18 days during the last three months to disrupt transportation and distribution process of fertilisers.

Khan held them also responsible for creating panic among the people by spreading rumours and instigating even plunder of the commodity in some places. He said all these actions have only multiplied the miseries of the people.

Asked whether the government's intervention for distribution of fertilisers was necessary, he said had the gov ernment not involved the district and thana administration the situation would have further aggravated leaving the farmers at the mercy of some dishonest traders and vested quarters.

#### Miscreants kill sexagenarian

SATKHIRA, Apr 2: A sexagenarian farmer was hacked to death by some unidentified miscreants at his residence at Roypur village in Tala thana early this morning.

# Remove bottlenecks

From Page 1 around 18 per cent, including gain tax, stamp duties and registration costs, were exces-

sively high, REHAB proposed a reduction of this cost to around six per cent. "We also feel that the above mentioned reduction will not make any significant loss to the government exchequer

since the lower cost of registration will result in higher volume of sales," argued Arshi Haider, who is also managing director of Building Technology and Ideas Ltd. He felt that the RAJUK pro-

cedures for approval of building plans is both inconsistent and inefficient. "The zoning laws and building construction codes for the metropolis need to be revaluated and the approval procedure in RAJUK needs simplification," Haider

He also suggested stream lining the loan approval procedure of the House Building Finance Corporation. "The bureaucracy and loan approval procedure at HBFC is so cumbersome that it fails to play any effective role in financing our clients," he said.

The legal system also needs to be strengthened and mortgage foreclosure procedures simplified to attract banks and financial institutions in providing loans in the housing sector, he noted.

Among others present at the press conference were Pintoo Khan, managing director of City Development Company: Shamsul Alam, secretary general of the association and managing director of Abashon (Pvt) Ltd; Lt. Col (retd) Mahtabuddin Ahmed, chairman of Property Development Ltd; Dr Toufig M Siraj, managing director of Sheltech (Pvt) Ltd; A B A Sirajuddowla, managing director of Confidence Builders. Nasrul Hamid, managing

director of Hamid Real Estate Construction Ltd and A K M Shahidullah, managing director of Bitta-Bibhab Unnayan (Pvt) Ltd.

Responding to a question, Dr Toufig of Sheltech claimed that allegations of corruption and malpractices were not prevalent in the house or apartment building sector. "We haven't received any complaints about any of our members using shoddy products, he said. An understanding on a uniform standard could be initiated among the developers in the near future, he added.

On maintaining fire safety standards, Pintoo Khan noted that RAJUK did not have any requirement until recently, but added that the architects of most buildings incorporate fire safety and security mechanisms into the designs. He emphasised the need for educating the clients about the use of the various safety and precautionary measures.

Noting that data about the commercial house building sector is very difficult to find, the REHAB president said the association has undertaken a detailed study on the property development sector.

According to a preliminary survey on 126 projects with 8,000 apartments around Dhaka, revealed at the press conference, the apartments range in size from 500 square feet (sft) to 4,500sft and is selling at between Tk eight lakh to Tk 45 lakh.

The largest segment of the apartments surveyed were in the 1,000-15,00 sft range at 32.83 per cent while 15,00-2,000 sft were 28.72 per cent, 2,000-2,500 sft at 19 per cent. 2,500-3,000 sft at 15 per cent, 3,000-3,500 sft at 1.46 per cent, 3,500-4,500 sft at 0.25 per cent and 500-1,000 sft was at 2.8 per cent.

#### **Editor: Mahfuz Anam**

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Hillary Rodham Clinton welcomes Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the reception hosted by the American Embassy in Dhaka yesterday to mark the visit of the US First Lady. - PID photo

# US has much to learn: Hillary

Rahman was present during

From Page 1

President told the US First Lady that there is rule of law in the country and democratic institutions are functioning.

The President also appreciated the role of the NGOs in supplementing government efforts to alleviate poverty and expand mass literacy.

Mrs Clinton, herself an accomplished lawyer, discussed the prospects for the profession in Bangladesh with the President. She said the United States is keenly observing the development of Bangladesh through the democratic process. She also said that she was interested to see quite a few rural development projects during her short trip with a view to getting fresh ideas to help the poorer section of the American society.

Minister-in-attendance and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Beguni Sarwari

# Hasina-Hillary

From Page 1 the US First Lady, also sent

her greetings and good wishes to President Bill Clinton. AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Tofael Ahmed, S A M S

Kibria and Abul Hassan Chowdhury also attended the reception. When contacted, S A M S

Kibria said Hasina's discussion with Hillary seemed to have been 'very cordial

#### Rajiv killing Jain Commission urged to summon Jayalalita

NEW DELHI, Apr 2: The Janata Party Chief, Dr Subramanian Swamy, has urged the Jain Commission to summon the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. Jayalalita, to elicit information on whether she had foreknowledge about the plot to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi, reports PTI.

In an additional affidavit filed before the one-man panel. Dr Swamy has also called for the summoning of the former TNCC (I) President, K Ramamurthy, for his article on "the Rajiv murder and the Indian conspirators" in a Tamil weekly 'Nakeeran' and the collector of Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu. Murugan.

The commission is expected to witness some interesting moments with the resumption of cross examination of the chief election commissioner, T N Seshan, at its hearing tomorrow.

Dr Swamy has alleged that Jayalalitha, who was the then AIADMK General Secretary when her party was contesting elections in an alliance with the Congress (I), "declined to address any meeting jointly with Rajiv Gandhi.'

He alleged that Jayalalita, who "after much persuasion" agreed to address a "joint meeting" at Krishnagiri on May 22, 1991, "suddenly decided to cancel the said joint appearance on the plea that she would go somewhere else in the neighbourhood."

### DU admission

From Page 1

Khandoker Science Building, 13471-13770 at Science Library, 13771-13870 at Food and Nutrition Institute, 13871-14050 at Modern Language Institute, 14051-14550 at Dhaka University Central Library, 14551-15750 at Lalmatia College, 15751-16980 at Science Annex Building. 16981-17480 at Sheikh Burhanuddin College, 17481-18680 at Begum Bodrunnesa College and 18681-21319 at Curzon Hall area.

However, the details of the seating arrangement will be available in the notice boards of Science Faculty and respective centres.

the audience with the President.

Today, Mrs Clinton and members of her entourage have a busy schedule. They will leave early this morning for Moishahati, in Kaliganj thana of Jessore district, to see a Grameen Bank project

She will also visit a nonformal school run by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) at Uttarpara of Churamankathiland a women's development programme of Banchte Shekha, an NGO, at Dogachia of the district

She will also witness a joint exercise by contingents of the US and Bangladesh Air Force at the BAF Base in Jessore.

#### Arrival

Earlier, Hillary Clinton and her daughter Chelsea were given a warm welcome when a special US Air Force plane

### Hillary meets Hillary

KATHMANDU, Apr 2: US First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton today met Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb the world's highest mountain the Everest located in Nepal.

"She is a charming lady. enjoyed the meeting," Sir Edmund, a 75-year-old New Zealander, told Reuters.

The meeting dubbed a "Hillary-meets-Hillary" encounter was Clinton's last en gagement before she left the Himalayan kingdom for Bangladesh, the next leg of a South Asian tour that has already taken her to Pakistan and

Clinton returned from a jungle safari weekend in Nepal's foothill forests to meet the man who scaled the 8,848metre (29.028 feet) Everest in 1953 with Nepal's Tenzing Norgay Sherpa.

June Hillary, the mountaineer's wife, presented Clinton with a book on Sagarmata, a local name for the Everest. Her husband now runs a

trust that does work to help the Sherpa community, the famed Himalayan porters and shepherds, in the district where the Everest is located.

touched down at the Zia International Airport at 3:10 vesterday afternoon. Foreign Minister A S M

Mostafizur Rahman and Mrs Rahman greeted the US First Lady at the gangway. A red carpet was rolled out at the VVIP terminal for the

distinguished guest, who ar rived on the fourth leg of her five-nation South Asian swing. On arrival. Mrs Clinton expressed her admiration for the

them as a model for self-reliance and resilience. She would learn more about special efforts being made to help women and children achieve their full potential, the

US First Lady said in a state-

Bangladeshi people and lauded

ment issued upon her arrival. State Minister for Women Affairs Begum Sarwari Rahman Foreign Secretary Faroon Sobhan, US Ambassador in Dhaka David N Merrill and Mrs Darlene Merrill were also present at the airport.

Two little children presented Hillary and Chelsea Clinton with bouquets on the tarmac after being introduced to the line of presentees.

Shortly afterwards, Hillary Clinton boarded a special limousine guarded by securitymen which took her to the Sonargaon Hotel where she will be staying during her so-

#### Reception at **US** Embassy

The visiting US First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, held a reception at the American Embassy at Baridhara in the city yesterday evening, reports

It was attended by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and some of her cabinet colleagues, and opposition leaders Awami League president Sheikh Hasina, Jativa Party leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Matiur Rahman Nizami.

US Ambassador in Dhaka David N Merrill, Mrs Darlene Merrill and senior diplomats of the mission were also present

Mrs Clinton greeted each of the guests who also included representatives of leading NGOs, women organisations. bureaucrats, journalists and the elite.



elected Chairman in the elections held on January 22 this A car was set on fire at Motijheel in the city yesterday. - Star photo

### Shops, houses gutted in Barisal: 8 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 2: At least 8 persons were injured and property worth about one crore taka was gutted in a devastating fire at Dhamura bazar under Uzirpur thana of Barisal district around 3:30 pm this afternoon.

Police and witnesses said the fire broke out when a gas cylinder exploded in a welding shop in Dhamura bazar this afternoon.

During the two-hour fire 27 shops in the bazar and 35 houses of adjoining areas were burnt down destroying property worth about one crore As there was no fire station

near the bazar local people and police controlled the fire after 2 hour-long battle.

Injured 8 persons were admitted to Dhamura Health Complex in critical condition.

### 3 killed in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

Three persons were killed and another was injured in separate road accidents in and around the city yesterday.

A rickshaw-puller, Nadir Ali, 35, succumbed to his in juries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 3:10 am yesterday after being hit by a speedy truck in front of the Shishu Park near Shahbagh.

In another incident, one Shipul, 35, died on the spot when a truck ran over him near Savar on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in the morn-

Meanwhile, an automobile spares trader Amir Hossain 38, succumbed to his injuries on way to the MDCH from Gazipur at about 11:00 am vesterday.

Witnesses said that Amir was seriously injured when a Sherpur-bound bus collided head-on with the scooter in which he was coming to

Anwar Hossain, 28, younger brother of Amir, was injured in the accident.

### Bus service suspended

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL. Apr 2: For the second day today, road communications between the Barguna district headquarters and Kalapara remained suspended.

According to sources, some students of Amtali College vesterday stopped the move ment of at least ten passenge buses of different routes, demanding separate bus services to different destinations from Amtali.

## Azam

From Page

The processionists attacked the Jamaat office at Darga Patti in the town and beat up a local Jamaat leader, Shajahan Ali. They also set ablaze his motorbike. He was admitted to a local clinic with serious

Later, in the evening, BNP activists led by T R M Nurul Islam brought out another procession and paraded the main roads of the town chanting anti-Jamaat slogans.

Jamaat leader Shajahan Ali filed a case against five people with the local police.

## Chhayanaut's appeal

By Staff Correspondent

Chhayanaut, a cultural or ganisation, which greets the Bangla New Year every year by holding cultural programmes at the Ramna Batamul, yesterday in a press statement urged the authorities to take initiative against vendors and temporary stalls at the Ramna Batmaul premises as those create chaos and confusion.

The statement signed by Prof Fazlul Halim Chowdhury. Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui. Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed and others said that in the previous years scattered stalls had disturbed the main cultural programmes

### Sylhet poura representatives sworn in

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET. Apr 2: The newly elected chairman and 21 commissioners of the Sylhet Pourashava took their oaths of offices today. The Deputy Commissioner

administered the oath at a function held at the Pourashava Auditorium this morning. The outgoing chairman A F M Kamal also spoke on the occa-Bodruddin Kamran was

# The Midnight File

### OIC concerned at renewal of UN sanctions against Libya

JEDDAH. Apr 2: The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) expressed deep concern Sunday at the renewal of UN sanctions against Libya and appealed to the Security Council to reconsider. A statement from the Jeddah-based, 52member OIC said its secretary-general, Hamid al-Gabid "expressed deep concern in the face of this resolution, at a time when he was particularly hopeful" that the sanctions against Libya would be lifted or eased, "given the cooperation it has shown," reports AP.

#### 58 Kurds killed in Turkish attack

ANKARA, Apr 2: Turkey stepped up its military offensive against Kurdish rebels in different fronts inside the country and in northern Iraq on Sunday, killing a total of 58 Turkish Kurdish rebels. Despite showing no immediate sign of easing the offensive, the government on Sunday launched a diplomatic campaign to counter mounting pressure from Western countries on Turkey to pull its troops from northern Iraq, reports AP.

# Private sector can rev up N-technology'

Speakers at a symposium in the city yesterday underscored the need for involvement of private sector for commercial application of nuclear technologies, reports BSS.

The symposium on the "role of nuclear technologies in development" was held at the National Science Museum premises on the occasion of central exhibition and competition of National Science and Technology Week that concludes tomorrow

Former chairman of BAEC Dr M A Mannan presided over the symposium. BAEC member Dr M A Wazed Mia. professor of Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT), Gazipur Dr M Anwar Hossain and professor of Jahangirnagar University Dr M Maniruzzaman participated in the discussion.

BAEC chairman M A Quaiyum said, BAEC encourages private sector involvement for commercial application of its research results, and had already set up a commercial irradiator plant at Chittagong for irradiation of medicine. medical equipment and exportable frozen foods with private collaboration.

He said the commission had adopted a long-term plan for best and optimum utilisation of its existing research establishments and manpower. He said the plan gives priority to its future research and development programmes to solve the problems, involved in different sectors of the national economy.

Dr Wazed Mia said, the government should take immediate decision on the muchtalked about Rooppur nuclear power project. He said, Rooppur should be turned into a

#### Nurses' strike From Page 1

student nurses said no initiative has so far been taken by the authorities for meeting their eight-point charter of demand.

Some 11,000 members of Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association (BDNA) and 3,500 members of Bangladesh Student Nurses Union (BSNU) have been on strike since March 18 to realise their de-The nurses' demands in-

clude elimination of the posts of assistant nurses, granting selection grade to diploma nurses, accommodating nursing service in cadre service. converting Nursing Directorate into a department, steps to ensure that four more nursing colleges start functioning and jobs for the unemployed trai ned nurses.

The strike was enforced following a decision of the representatives' conference of nurses on March 10.

# Qatarı team

From Page 1 of common concern.

The two leaders focussed on problems facing the Muslim Ummah. They reviewed the situation

process in the Middle East and civil war in Afghanistan. The two sides condemned the heinous Serbian aggression on the Bosnian Muslims and expressed deep concern for the tragic loss of life in

Chechnya and also called for an

immediate cessation of hostili-

in the Gulf, the on-going peace

ties there. The Qatar Foreign Minister. during the talk appreciated the progress achieved in economic and social life in

Bangladesh. He extended an invitation to Mostafizur Rahman to visit the state of Qatar. Rahman accepted the invitation.

After the talks, Al-Thani left Dhaka for New Delhi ending his two-day visit.

"I am very happy with the outcome of the visit" he told newsmen prior to his departure, expressing the hope that certain decisions taken during the bilateral talks will take concrete shape by the year-

Our relations will receive a further boost" Thani said. Mostafizur Rahman saw him off at the airport.

nuclear power complex where a number of plants would be

added in phases to meet the

energy demand of the nor-

thern districts. Prof Hossain said, the research activities of BAEC should be upgraded and its role be made known to the people. He said, every year a 300-megawatt capacity power plant should be added to the national grid where nuclear power could be the best op-

There was another symposium at the same venue on the "role of management and infrastructure for development of science and technology." Professor Ali Asghar of the

Engineering University was the main speaker. Acting chairman of the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) Dr M Yusuf. member-director of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Dr Z Karim and Professor Amir Hossain Khan of Dhaka University partici-

## Bogra BCL leader

From Page 1

his uncle at the zila parishad at 11:00 am. Several cocktails were blasted during the melee.

Police rushed to the scene

and charged batons, leaving 10

people injured. Police also picked up some people but released them later.

Bishu was rushed to Mohammad Ali Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Emdad

From Page 1

The next date of hearing of the case is April 11 when all the three accused so far arrested in connection with Gen Manzur's killing would be pro-

CMM, Chittagong. The two other arrested accused are Maj Gen (retd) Abdul Latif and Lt Col Shamsur Rah-

duced in the court of the

Meanwhile, CID sources said that investigation was in progress and officials recorded statements of a number of army officials and soldiers who reportedly witnessed the killing of Gen Manzur.

As part of their probe strategy, the investigators have now decided to produce more witnesses, instead of accusing or arresting more people. A CID source said the name

of jailed former president H M

Ershad also came up in the

process of investigation. Power From Page 1

ernment signed a MOU with another US company, the international Energy Group, for setting up two power plants with generation capacity of 300 MW each. But the company instead of finalising the agreement has extended the

MOU for another one year. A ministry source said they have received 37 offers from local and foreign companies interested in investing in the power sector, but so far, only Geopetrol International of Canada gave a concrete offer.

The company has given a performance guarantee to supply 210 MW power everyday. The tariff mentioned in their proposal is almost close to the tariff of the Power Development Board. The Geopetrol is expected to sign MOU on April

A 13-member committee formed to look into the private power generation offers has scanned all the 37 offers, but approved only seven offers so

#### Shishu Park From Page 1

the park are: Benkigo train,

Wonder wheel, Merry go round, Battery car, New trabant, Roller skating, Flowercup-ride, Chair tower, Air gun shooting. Trampoline, Baby cycle. Flying airplane and helicopter. All the items, except plane and copter were installed when the park was set up in 1979.