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Cricket Quiz 1**
Entries close today

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NEWS BRIEFS

5 plastic shops gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent
Five plastic shops were gutted yesterday afternoon in a fire at Haidar Baskala Lane near Urdu Road in the city, according to fire department sources. The cause of the fire, which started at around 3:05 pm, could not be known. Two units of the Fire Brigade brought the fire under control in 45 minutes. An inquiry into the incident is underway, the sources said.

Girl chopped to death

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Feb 24: An eight-year-old girl was chopped to death by rival group at Anipur village in Saitkupa thana today. The girl Kukila was killed during a clash over land dispute, sources said. Her mother and sister were also injured.

A case was lodged. However, none was arrested so far.

Two killed in road accident

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 24: Two people were killed and another was injured when a bus hit them on Bogra-Nagarbari highway today. Witnesses said Sanwar Hossain, 28, and Abdur Rashid, 20, died on the spot as a Bogra-bound night coach from Dhaka hit them at around 5 pm. They were waiting at the Khudro Daulatpur bus stand in Rajganj thana at around 5 am, reports UNB.

50 hurt in clashes

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Feb 24: At least 50 persons were injured, 13 of them seriously, in two separate clashes in Kalapara Thana of Patakhali district today. In the morning, the armed people of Sekendar Sarder and Aziz Howlader clashed following the dispute over a piece of land at Latachappali union. While in the afternoon, the people of Sahjahan Mia and Manu Khalifa clashed at the Dhilashar Union as a sequel to previous enmity. The injured were admitted to Kalapara Thana Health Complex.

20 die in Tamil Nadu road mishap

NEW DELHI, Feb 24: Twenty people were killed and 30 injured when a bus and a lorry collided and caught fire today in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the United News of India reported, says Reuters.

Matiya Chowdhury arrested 100 hurt on first day of non-cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

At least 100 people including 6 newsmen were injured in sporadic incidents of bomb blasts and clashes on the first day of the Opposition-called 3-day 'non-cooperation' programme yesterday that paralysed life and disrupted communications across the country.

In the city, Opposition activists clashed with police in front of the Secretariat and with BNP activists at J. Mohakhal and at other places. At least 25 people were injured.

The Opposition name

virtually took the form of a hartal in the city with motorised vehicles staying off the roads and most businesses remaining closed.

Police arrested 20 people including Awami League leader Matiya Chowdhury, ward commissioner and secretary of the city unit of Mohila Awami League Nasima Mantu and another party activist Sajeda Begum.

Matiya Chowdhury and the two other women activists were produced before the CMM court which sent them to jail with one month deten-

tion. Activities at Chittagong and Chalna ports remained suspended. Some bank branches were ransacked in Jhalakati.

In Khulna, the offices of the Divisional Commissioner and the district collectorate were locked by opposition activists while the district Awami League office was ransacked by BNP activists.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, which had boycotted the February 15 parliamentary polls called the non-cooperation programme.

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Pickets hurled bombs at the policemen near the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Saddam's sons-in-law, 7 others shot dead



Family picture of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (C/foreground). Standing from left are, Saddam's daughter Raghad, son Uday (c), other son Qusai, and son-in-law General Hussein Kamel Hassan. Saddam's wife is on his right.

— AFP file photo

BAGHDAD, Feb 24: Saddam Hussein's sons-in-law who defected to Jordan have been slain by relatives after their wives divorced them and their clan rejected their repentance and return, ruling that their blood be shed for treason, reports AP.

The Interior Ministry said the two brothers, Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel al-Majid and Saddam Kamel al-Majid, were slain Friday afternoon when members of their clan stormed their residence in the Al-Saydeh district of Baghdad. Seven other people including their father were killed in the gun battle.

The al-Majid brothers, the highest ranking Iraqi officials ever to defect, had returned with their wives from a six-month exile on Tuesday. Saddam had allowed them, back without explicitly promising to pardon the turncoats who had publicly pledged to overthrow his regime.

Hussein Kamel al-Majid had been in charge of Iraq's secret weapons programme, while Saddam Kamel al-Majid was deputy head of the Iraqi leader's palace guard.

When they defected in August they were the first members of the inner circle to depart. It was a major embarrassment to Saddam at a time when the country's 20 million people were suffering under

United Nations sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But their defection never threatened Saddam's rule, and the al-Majids were shunned by Iraqi opposition groups because of their close links to Saddam. King Hussein of Jordan, who initially threw his weight behind the men, later kept them at arm's length.

Before they returned to Iraq, the defectors said 'reforms' by Saddam's government had encouraged them to go home.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 24: President Saddam Hussein's government is on its way out as life in Iraq becomes intolerable, Jordan's King Hussein predicted in an interview published here today. Jordan would 'support a peaceful change' and the Iraqi people 'must not fear bloodshed if a change occurs,' he said, reports AFP.

Also, their wives were homesick, according to sources in contact with the defectors.

Raghad and Rana had never wanted to defect, the Iraqi news agency said. Raghad is known to be the Iraqi leader's favourite daughter and is said to have played a key role in arranging their return.

The Iraqi government said

Tuesday they had been welcomed back as 'ordinary' citizens, meaning they would neither have the protection nor the privileges Saddam's family members enjoy.

First indications that the men's fate was all but certain came Friday when the official media announced that Saddam's daughters had divorced their husbands.

The Iraqi News Agency described the al-Majid brothers as 'failed traitors,' and said Saddam's daughters 'are refusing to stay married to men who betrayed the homeland, the trust and the lofty values of their noble families and kinsfolk.'

Raghad was married to Hussein Kamel, and Rana to Saddam Kamel. The official media said they both divorced their husbands on Thursday.

A day later, relatives of the men declared that their blood should be shed due to their treason to the homeland, the Iraqi news agency reported.

Clan members stormed the al-Majid residence in Baghdad and killed the brothers in a gun battle, the agency said, citing sources in the Interior Ministry.

Their father, Kamel al-Majid, and a younger brother Hakim, also were slain along with two attackers and three passersby, including a child, the agency said.

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US Congressman arrives in city today

By Staff Correspondent
US Congressman Bill Richardson arrives in the capital today on a two-day trip.

A personal friend of president Bill Clinton, the US Congressman is known to be an influential member of the US Congress where he also serves as a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Bill Richardson is also the House chief Deputy Whip, Vice President of the Democratic National Committee and is also a member of the Helsinki Commission on Human Rights.

During his short trip Richardson is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman and will call on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina.

Initially, his visit was planned to take a first hand

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Hasina demands release of Matiya others

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday condemned the arrest and repression on opposition leaders and workers during the non-cooperation movement in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country and demanded their immediate release, reports UNB.

She protested the arrest of Awami League Agriculture and Cooperative Secretary Begum Matia Chowdhury, Dhaka City Corporation Commissioner Nasima Mantu, party workers Sajeda Begum, Anis Ahmed, Rafiqul Islam, Majidul Maju, Mahbubul Alam, Nazrul Islam.

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Police raid Suranjit's house

By Staff Correspondent

Police raided the city residence of Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta last night, family sources said.

According to Sengupta's wife, a group of about 10 policemen entered his Jhigatola residence at around 12:15 am and searched for the AL leader for about 20 minutes.

Sengupta was not present in the house during the police search.

8 held for showing black flag during PM's Feni visit

FENI, Feb 24: Police today arrested eight people — three of Sadar thana and five from Daganbhuiyan — on charges of showing black flag and throwing bombs at the Prime Minister's motorcade during her recent visit to the district, reports UNB.

In a pre-dawn raid, police picked up Jahangir Alam, former chairman of Farahpur union parishad in Sadar thana, from his village residence.

Two others, Sumon and Mizan, both activists of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League, were arrested early today from their Masterpara residences in the town.

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Political Uncertainty Chamber leaders in quest of way out

Star Report

Chamber leaders are planning to sit together on Tuesday in quest of ways to keep business out of the current political turmoil.

Representatives from the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), and the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) will sit to discuss the political situation that has, by and large, affected the country's business environment.

Meanwhile, manufacturers and exporters are hopelessly watching their business slipping out of their grips as markets are being lost because of the on-going crisis.

A number of businessmen told The Daily Star that unless the situation normalises immediately, the country may slide back into a serious economic crisis.

Very recently, a number of my buyers came up to Bangkok, but then they cancelled their

visit to Bangladesh because of the situation here," said Manzur Elahi, Chairman of Apex Group of Industries, a leading export house of leather goods. "The situation was not this bad even six months back."

Everybody in the leather sector is going to fall short of his export target because of hartals and violence," said Elahi.

Traders in Dhaka's wholesale market are reporting lower volume of sales. "People want to keep cash in hand because of the political uncertainty," one trader said.

Chief of a big pharmaceutical industry, who refused to be named, told The Daily Star that they are facing problems in importing raw materials because of frequent strikes leading to congestion in the port.

"Pharmaceuticals is one of the few promising sectors in

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Gazette on new MPs

Star Report

The Election Commission has prepared a gazette notification listing the names of the parliamentarians elected to the Sixth Jatiya Sangsad, according to highly-placed official sources.

Quoting the gazette, a source who received a copy said, it carried names of 208 parliamentarians serialised according to the constituencies.

When contacted last night, Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil confirmed that the EC has sent the gazette for printing. He, however, declined to elaborate.

The EC has postponed elections to 92 constituencies following widespread violence and the absence of polling officials.

Elections to the Sixth Jatiya Sangsad was held on February 15, amidst resistance from the boycotting Opposition political parties.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami had been agitating against elections under a party government for the two years and they are demanding holding the elections under a caretaker government.

SA-England tie today



RAWALPINDI, Feb 24: South African World Cup captain Hansie Cronje is determined to keep up the pressure against England here tomorrow, reports AFP.

Cronje, whose side are sure of a quarter final spot after convincing victories over United Arab Emirates and New Zealand, said: "We don't want to slacken off. We have to try and win every game, we have to keep the intensity going."

It was that intensity which overwhelmed previously unbeaten New Zealand in Faisalabad last Tuesday, with Kiwi skipper Lee Germon admitting the aggressive South African bowling and fielding had pressure his team into mistakes.

England's campaign, opening with defeat to the New Zealanders, got a boost of sorts after its win over Holland but they are yet to get anywhere near South Africa's quality of play.

More importantly, South Africa came here with an important psychological edge after beating Michael Atherton's men 6-1 in a home limited-overs series last month.

Cronje and his men are only too aware, however, that England are among the best limited overs players when in from and can boast an outstanding World Cup record.

England captain Mike Atherton said he was pleased with the way his team had disposed of minnows Holland in

BTV and Star Sports will telecast today's match live commencing at 10 am (BST).

Peshawar on Thursday but their preparation for Sunday's game has not been ideal.

While the South Africans were having a full-scale practice in the middle at the KRL Club in Rawalpindi on Friday, England were travelling by bus from Peshawar, by the time England had checked into their hotel rain was falling, making practice impossible.

The skies had cleared this morning. Poor drainage at the

Pindi Stadium caused the first match played there, between South Africa and UAE, to be postponed after rain the previous day. Extra covers have been brought in but further rain could again cause a disruption.

England batsman Robin Smith has recovered from a knee injury but may still not win selection, while star batsman Graeme Hick is still suffering from a thigh strain and is rated only "90 per cent fit". He remains the player most likely to swing England's fortunes.

South African opening batsman Andrew Hudson will miss

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UN refugee status for women fleeing sexual violence

GENEVA, Feb 24: Women who have been raped, suffered sexual violence or fear female circumcision are entitled to refugee status if they leave their country, the United Nations declared on Friday, reports Reuters.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) urged more countries to follow Canada and the United States in drafting guidelines recognising a woman's right to international protection against 'gender-based persecution'.

Representatives from 16 Western countries attended the UNHCR's first two-day symposium on the sensitive subject. The Geneva-based agency wants governments to interpret the 1951 UN refugee convention as including sexual violence along with discrimination by race, nationality and religion among the grounds for justifying an applicant's 'well-founded fear of

persecution."

"Women who flee gender-based persecution, however, small their number, should not be turned away from your borders or refused recognition as refugees," Wairimu Karago, deputy head of UNHCR's division of international protection, said in a speech.

"They are not a threat — they are themselves threatened — and humanity dictates that they receive protection and refugee status," she added.

In a bid to reassure western governments that granting such recognition would not open floodgates to millions of female asylum-seekers, Karago, who is Kenyan, told delegates:

"UNHCR in no way foresees large outflows of women seeking asylum in your countries because of policies such as these."

But UNHCR officials acknowledged that they faced an

uphill battle in convincing traditional societies in Asia and Africa to accept principles such as reproductive health rights.

"These issues are fundamental to the lives of many women around the world," Karago said.

"They are women who are terrified because of their refusal to comply with the indignity of certain social codes — who are given no choice but to mutilate their baby daughters — whose government fails to protect them from extreme violence and sexual torture," she added.

Karen Landgren, chief legal adviser of the UNHCR's protection division, told a final news conference: "We are trying to make sure that women refugees who need protection are recognised as refugees and they get the protection they need."

Most school text books yet to reach market

By Mizan Ali and Reaz Ahmad

All but the English text book for class IX and some books for class VI are not yet available in the market as the third month of the academic year 1996 approaches.

Sources at the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) said that there was an agreement with the publishers' association that they would make the text books available in the market within a week of handing over of 'positives' (manuscripts) of the books.

The 'positives' of six books for class VI were given to the publishers in mid-January. The last copy of the 'positive' for the agriculture book for class VI was handed over on February 7, the sources said.

So far, the publishers could make available in the market only four books of class VI — Bangla, English, Mathematics and Islamiat — in a limited scale.

'Positives' of 10 books cov-

ering all the compulsory and some elective subjects under the new syllabi for class IX were handed over to the publishers by February 16, said the sources at NCTB. But the publishers could make available only the English book for class IX, the syllabus of which was not changed.

The NCTB itself took the responsibility of printing the Bangla books for class IX.

Prof Md Khurshed Alam, Chairman of the Board, told this correspondent that the books are not available in the market because of delay by the publishers and new syllabi for some subjects.

Publishers, however, alleged that non-availability of papers delayed printing of the books. But knowledgeable sources said that the printing was being delayed because the publishers are now busy printing note books for those text books.

IN MEMORY



Today is the second death anniversary of late Hamidur Rahman Sinha, founder-Chairman of The ACME Laboratories Limited, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies of the country. The members of ACME family and all his relatives and well-wishers are praying for the departed soul.

 The ACME Laboratories Ltd.