

# Vehicles still stranded at 3 ferry ghats

MANIKGANJ, Mar 3: Traffic jam at Aricha, Nagarbari and Daulatdia ferry terminals continued with hundreds of vehicles remaining stranded for navigation problem in Padma-Jamuna river channels, reports UNB.

UNB that ferries, with heavy loads of trucks, hit shoals in the channel, slowing down ferry traffic.

In the wake of worsening ferry problem, a few agitating truck drivers brought out a protest procession at Nagarbari ghat this morning demanding that their serial numbers be given immediately. They apprehended that the traffic system might collapse owing to lack of maintenance of serial system. Officials said they had called for police reinforcements for maintaining serial amidst rush of vehicles.

More than 2,000 vehicles including buses and trucks remained stranded till noon today.

BIWTC registered some 1,643 vehicles at different terminals. But drivers said more than 600 vehicles were still waiting for registration of their serials.

A total of 2,626 vehicles have been ferried in the last 24 hours, the sources said. Drivers said vegetables and other perishables worth an estimated Tk 2 crore were rotting.

BIWTC (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation) sources said ferries were carrying less-than-normal loads because of sharp fall in water level in the cross-channel-4.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has visited the channel and ordered officials concerned to open up a new channel through emergency dredging.

A BIWTA official in a letter is known to have requested the BIWTC DGM at Aricha not to move ferry vessels in routes having less than six-foot draught.

"Without dredging it is impossible to keep channel-4 operative," said an official. And if the authorities take decision for dredging, ferry service will have to be suspended for few days, he added.

Some truck drivers told



Admission seekers queue up on the Dhaka University campus yesterday for buying entry forms for honours classes. - Star photo

# PM: Non-party govt

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isations and countrymen in this respect. "I firmly believe that all political parties of the country will take part in the seventh parliamentary election, Inshallah," the Prime Minister said spelling out the modalities of the election-time non-party government.

Her 14-minute speech was aimed at defusing the continuing political agitation launched by the country's three major opposition parties that boycotted the February 15 polls, demanding the votes to be held under a neutral caretaker government.

The Prime Minister said she had wanted to go to polls with all political parties and individuals and also desired to join future elections with the participation of all.

Begum Zia said an acceptable solution could not be evolved in absence of provisions for such non-party government in the Constitution and requisite number of members in Parliament.

She observed that there would be no such problems after the formation of Parliament elected through the February 15 election.

"Under the circumstances, now we can take initiative for a constitutional and pragmatic solution of the problem. Because we sincerely want a

speedy and effective solution to all problems," the Prime Minister said.

Referring to the opposition demand for appointment of an unelected person as Prime Minister, she said it was beyond the government's capacity as there was no provision for it in the Constitution.

Focusing on the background of the crisis, she mentioned her offer for resignation 30 days ahead of election and request for the opposition MPs not to resign and return to Parliament on December 28, 1994. She said she had proposed discussion on the floor of the House on how government will run after her resignation.

"We could work out the framework of election-time government through discussion if they would have returned to parliament. But they didn't."

Begum Zia said two-thirds majority is required for constitutional amendment. Knowing it fully well, they tendered resignation en masse and did not return to Sangsad.

She said as a result, at one stage, their seats fell vacant. Then again formation of a national government for the election period was proposed and they were requested to return to Parliament through by election. But they didn't agree either.

# Redwan reelected BGMEA President

By Staff Correspondent

The executive committee of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in a meeting yesterday re-elected Redwan Ahmed as the president of the association.

With this, Redwan has been elected president of the BGMEA for the third time, says a press release.

The meeting also elected three vice presidents and a treasurer of the association. They are Shahabuddin Ahmed, first vice president, Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury, 2nd vice president, Mahfuzur Rahman, vice president, and Mohammad Sirajul Haq, treasurer.

The 27-member executive committee meeting was held yesterday after the 9 vacant seats of executive committee members were filled in an election on February 29. The election was held for 6 members from the Dhaka region and 3 members from Chittagong region.

# Radar Case: HC issues rule on govt

A High Court Division bench yesterday issued rule upon the government to show cause within four weeks as to why the proceedings in special case No. 155 of 1994, better known as Radar Case, against former Air Chief Marshal Sultan Mahmud shall not be quashed, reports BSS.

The court comprised Justice Mohammad Mostafizur Huq and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman.

The court also stayed further proceedings till disposal of the rule.

Sultan Mahmud filed application for quashing the proceedings of Special Case No. 155 of 1994, now pending in the court of additional sessions judge and special judge, Dhaka.

The case, in brief, is that Ali Haider, officer, Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed FIR on May 4, 1992, with Cantonment police station alleging that the accused as Chief of Bangladesh Air Force, along with former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad, former Air Chief Montazuddin Ahmed, and Shahjad Ali, director United Traders Limited, in collusion with each other purchased radar at higher price than market price, thereby caused loss of Taka 640442919.10 to the State and they themselves got the money for their own benefit.

Advocate Gazul Huq, Advocate Shamsuddin Babul and Advocate Obaidur Rahman Mostafiz appeared for the petitioner.

Deputy Attorney General Kawsaruddin Ahmed appeared for the State.

# Sherpur farmers demonstrate for fertiliser

SHERPUR, Mar 3: Hundreds of aggrieved farmers swarmed into the town today and demonstrated at the Deputy Commissioner's residence demanding fertiliser to save their rice crops, reports UNB.

Later, the protesters in a procession went to the DC office to place their demand for supply of urea, an essential input for IRR1-Boro paddy farming.

In a statement, she said the BNP government has again proved its autocratic character by issuing the warrant and denied the rights of individuals to freedom of speech and opinion as enshrined in the Constitution.

Hasina demanded immediate withdrawal of the warrant of arrest against Nilima Ibrahim.

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# Mixed reaction to PM's address

By Staff Correspondent

The Prime Minister's proposals last night for a dialogue with the Opposition was considered by a section of people as extending an olive branch in resolving the lingering political crisis while many others thought it would have been even better if the PM had outlined her offer more specifically.

It is a positive development that the Prime Minister has eventually conceded to the Opposition demand for general elections under a neutral and non-party government, said Omar Haider Chowdhury, an economist of the BIDS.

According to him, had the PM accepted it earlier, the nation could have averted many political and socio-economic damages caused by the Opposition movement.

A retired government official said, "It is old wine in a new bottle. It is too little, too late," he added.

Professor Abrar Chowdhury of Dhaka University in his instant reaction said, debacle in the February 15 elections has forced the BNP to concede to the demands of the opposition political parties.

He said, "It is better late than never." It would have been even better for negotiations, if the criticism on opposition political parties were avoided in the PM's address, he suggested.

Dr Asif Iqbal, a physician, said the Prime Minister's offer of negotiation with the Opposition on their demands aims at legitimising the Jatiya Sangsad elected through a controversial election.

Rosy Rashid, a school teacher, found some positive points in the PM's proposals. She suggested that the Opposition should now accept the PM's offer and enter into a dialogue to bring about an end to the political crisis.

Jahannara Islam Khan, a housewife, said she expected the proposals of the PM to be more concrete and specific.

# Historic 7th Mar programme

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League has drawn up an elaborate programme to observe the historic 7th March on Thursday, reports UNB.

On this day in 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historic speech at Ramna Racecourse maidan that inspired the nation to struggle for the country's liberation.

AL programmes will begin with hoisting the national and party flags at Bangabandhu Bhaban, and its central office and the party offices across the country at 6:00 am. The portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu Bhaban will be garlanded at 7:00 am.

On the occasion, Awami League president Sheikh Hasina will address a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3:00 pm.

Awami League and its front organisations will also organise different programmes to mark the day.

# One killed in armed clash

By DMCH Correspondent

A young man was killed and his two-year-old daughter critically injured during an armed clash between two groups of mastaans in West Kaptai area under Cantonment thana in the city last night.

The victim identified as Md Hossain Mamun, 32, who received fatal bomb injuries, died on the spot. The injured baby was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with serious bomb injuries, medical sources said.

The hour-long clash was due to previous enmity between two rival groups of Shewrapara and Mollahpara in West Kaptai.

Several rounds of gunshots were fired while dozens of cocktails blasted during the violence.

# Hot spell likely this month

A couple of hot spell is likely to sweep across the country in the last half of the current month, a Met Office forecast said in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The Met Office also predicted three to four light or moderate nor' westerly winds over Rajshahi, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Noakhali during the period.

The rest of the country may experience one to two light nor' westerly.

According to the forecast, Sylhet division is likely to experience the highest 60-70 mm rain against normal 61 mm during the current month.

Chittagong division may have 40-50 mm rain against normal 39 mm while Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal Divisions 30-40 mm each against 44, 36 mm and 39 mm each.

Rajshahi is likely to have the lowest 15-20 mm rain against 14 mm during the period.

# Wrists of young man chopped off in city

By DMCH Correspondent

The wrists of a young man were chopped off by a group of terrorists at Shahidbagh and a person was stabbed at Madhubagh in the city yesterday.

Shahid, 35, son of Abbas Uddin of East Jutrain, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with his wrists chopped off, medical sources said.

It was alleged that a relative of Shahid led the gang of about 12 persons, called him out of his house in Jurain at around 2 pm and took him to Shahidbagh. The gang assaulted Shahid and cut his wrists.

A land dispute is reportedly the cause of the incident. In another incident, an unidentified gang stabbed a motor workshop owner Shamsul Alam, 25, at Madhubagh at around 4:30 pm.

Alam, who received injuries in his abdomen and back was under treatment at the DMCH.

# The Midnight File

## Coalition govt formed in Turkey

ANKARA, Mar 3: Turkey's Conservative leaders Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller today signed a protocol for the formation of a coalition government between their parties. Ciller told a signing ceremony that Yilmaz, who heads the Motherland Party, would be Prime Minister until the end of this year in a rotating premiership, reports AFP.

## Opposition's reaction

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Keeping thousands of opposition political leaders and activists in jail, Hasina said, the PM's offer for dialogue was simply a 'farce'.

The AL chief alleged that the PM in her speech has tried to put the blame on the Opposition for failure of her government.

The people have rejected the 'farical polls' and credibility of the polls has also been questioned by the international community, Hasina said.

She suggested that to prove her sincerity about the necessity of polls under a caretaker government, the PM should take the following steps:

- \* cancellation of the February 15 elections;
- \* immediate resignation of the present government;
- \* announcement of a specific date for fresh polls under a neutral caretaker government.

## Jatiya Party

Jatiya Party said that the PM's address was a ploy to give constitutional legitimacy to the sixth Jatiya Sangsad.

The government has lost its legitimacy by unilaterally holding the February 15 parliamentary elections, said a statement, issued after a meeting of the party's central secretariat.

"So there is no question of any dialogue with this illegal government," the statement added.

## Jamaat

Jamaat-e-Islami said that there was no acceptable proposal in the PM's speech.

In a joint statement, Naeb-e-Amir of the Party Abbas Ali Khan and Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami said that the people had rejected the February 15 polls as well as this government for its at-

## BNP proposals

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Another influential BNP leader told this correspondent that if the Opposition, the AL in particular, declined to negotiate on the non-partisan government issue, their party would be compelled to go alone for initiating the necessary steps in the Sixth parliament for constitutionalising the provisions for general elections under a non-party administration.

"But such a move would be very unfortunate as the BNP wants to resolve the crisis on the basis of a consensus with all the major political parties and ensure a fully-contested polls," he said, asking not to be named.

Earlier, the two top leaders of the country, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the AL president Sheikh Hasina - exchanged letters in their abortive bids to resolve the political crisis.

UNB adds, Opposition activists in Chittagong went on a rampage in the port city immediately after the Prime Minister's address to the nation yesterday evening.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami activists brought out a number of processions and damaged vehicles in New Market and Agrabad areas immediately after the PM's address to the nation in the evening. They also exploded crackers in different parts of the city.

Earlier, city BNP brought out a procession from its office premises at about 5 pm and paraded different city streets shouting slogans against violence.

Fisheries and Live Stock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Special Envoy to the Prime Minister, Moshed Khan led the procession. Later, they held a rally in front of the BNP office.

US Ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk, delivered messages of condolences to Prime Minister Shimon Peres from President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

AFP reports: Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority banned six armed radical groups in the self-rule territories after a Hamas suicide bombing in Jerusalem today that killed at least 19 people.

## HC rule

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his office. Cyril Sikder, an Awami League leader, was arrested on February 26 and Qader Molla of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, was arrested on February 27 in Dhaka. Subsequently, all of them were served with 30 days' detention orders.

Barrister K S Nabi, Shaif Ahmed, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Nurul Islam Sujain moved the petition for Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, P C Guha and H S Dev Brahan appeared for Advocate Cyril Sikder.

Barrister Abdur Razzak and Advocate Nawab Ali appeared for Abdul Quader Molla.

Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khandker, Deputy Attorney General A F M Hasan Arif and Mujibur Rahman represented the government.

## 3 Jubo Dal

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under Daulatpur thana, another person was shot dead at noon today. Police said the victim was kidnapped from the road by some unidentified men who shot him dead.

Police recovered an identity card of Jatiyatobadi Sangskritik Dal from his pocket. The identity card, however, does not bear his name.

# SAARC business leaders start Europe tour

Senior business personalities from the seven South Asian nations yesterday began a trip to Germany and Belgium to promote business and develop close ties between the European and SAARC countries, reports UNB.

A K M Shamsuddoha, vice-president of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), is leading the 15-member delegation comprising senior level businessmen from all the seven member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The main objective of the visit is to apprise the leading European parliamentarians and exchange ideas about the role and importance of South Asia as a region of potential and promise in terms of their role in the global political and economic arena, said a press release in Dhaka yesterday.

# Repolling

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resistance. Meanwhile the Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and JSD (Rob) have declared that re-polling will also be resisted.

Public meetings and processions are being organised by the parties in the area to mobilise people not to participate in the re-polling.

# Qatari prince found dead in Cairo hotel

CAIRO, Mar 3: A Qatari prince was found dead in his Cairo hotel room today of an apparent drug overdose, police said, reports AP.

The victim was identified as Khalid bin Jasssem Al Thani, 32, who was reported to have come to Cairo for treatment for drug addiction.

A quantity of drugs and a syringe were found near his body, police sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity. They did not give details or say what narcotic was involved.

Officials at Qatar's embassy in Cairo were not available for comment.

Members of royal families and other wealthy Gulf Arabs often visit Egypt for entertainment and tourism.

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