Fertiliser supply to N-dists snapped

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 18: Fertiliser supply to the country's 16 northern districts remained snapped as truckers today struck work in protest against Sunday's assault on transport workers in Gurudaspur thana of Natore district, reports UNB.

Four trucks, after unloading fertiliser at Ahmadpur in Natore, were damaged at mob attack. Truck drivers Khorshed Ali and Samar and helper Balal were injured in the at-

District Truck Sramik Union today announced the suspension of movement of trucks engaged in supplying fertiliser to the northern districts on grounds of insecurity.

Transport leaders further alleged that hoodlums extorted toll at different places on the way of emergency supply of the agro-input which is essential at this peak season of IRRI-boro farming.

The government, earlier, had ordered adequate supply of fertiliser for the region's cultivators. The Opposition also relaxed their noncooperation only for fertiliser-carrying

Urea, delivered from Jamalpur Jamuna Fertiliser Factory across the Jamuna river, is unloaded at Sirajganj ghat and then supplied to the re-

Meanwhile, cultivation of IRRI-boro paddy, the region's main rice crops, has been threatened by dearth of fertiliser, pesticide and fuel oil.

A 50-kg bag of urea now sells at the ghat at Tk 270 while the rate doubles after reaching remote farming zones in North Bengal. Diesel and kerosene sell between Tk 35 and 40 per litre. Irrigation is heavily dependent on oil as most farming areas in the region are yet to be brought under power supply network.

About 25,000 shallow tubewells are about to become inoperative for want of fuel, seriously affecting crops, unofficial sources said.

Some 8,28,800 hectares of land has been brought under IRRI-boro paddy cultivation in the region during the current season, said local Agriculture Extension Department, apprenending that crop output may fall 50 per cent owing to various difficulties this year.

sustained by "command area"

this market (secondary) di-

mension could operate without

the knowledge of BCIC plant

It suggested for the cancel-

"As long as the command

management," said the report.

lation of the command area

system of fertiliser distribution

for allowing free trade of urea

area restrictions remain and

BCIC supply policy is based on

bureaucratic directives rather

than market signals, it would

he counter-productive to take

any direct actions against the

the non-traditional use of urea

was increasing over the years

but BCIC has failed to measure

those uses. The non-traditional

uses were in rice husking and

polishing, livestock feed, aqua-

least 100,000 metric tons of

urea were used annually in

non-crop sectors, and "this

component of demand is not

being corporated into BCIC's

Frequent and inconsistent

demand estimates and pro-

policy actions by the govern-

ment has produced substantial

risk in the fertiliser market

and are resulting in distortions

towards efficient and effective

benefit the local traders.

whether "genuine" or not, and

they have a comparative advan-

tage in lifting from the factory. But here political patronage

and even muscle power also

played an important role, the

Hajj flight

Another report adds:

From Page 1

Bangladesh Biman will leave

for Makkah on March 28 with

all the Hajj pilgrims from

All the Hajj pilgrims includ-

Chittagong district under gov-

ing those who have not yet re-

ceived letter from the Dhaka

Hajj Office regarding their

flights have been requested to

report at the temporary Haji camp at Uttara in Dhaka within

10 am on March 24 along with

their necessary articles and

to bring 12 copies of recent

passport size photograph to be

attested by gazetted officer

along with their medical exam-

Opposition

From Page 1

to hold separate rallies in the

city prior to their march to-

wards the Jatiya Sangsad.

The opposition parties plan

AL chief Sheikh Hasina is

JP will organize its rally at

scheduled to address her party

rally to be held at 2 pm in

the west-end of Panthapath at

3 pm while Jamaat's rally will

be held at the north gate of the

Baitul Mukarram Mosque at

yesterday announced that the

three-hour relaxation period

for banks during their current

non-cooperation programme

would not be effective for today

and banks would remain

closed. But the 4 pm to 10 pm

exemption for shops and 4 pm

to 5 am exemption for export-

oriented industries would re-

main effective, said the three

parties in separate press re-

Besides, the Opposition

the same time.

front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Every Hajj pilgrim will have

ernment arrangement.

documents.

ination certificate.

The secondary markets

duction planning."

market operation.

report noted.

According to a source, at

culture and brick firing.

The report also said that

within Bangladesh.

secondary markets."

"It is highly unlikely that

regulations.

USAID study suggests Dhaka should privatise, increase fertiliser price

By Govinda Shil

A USAID-financed study has suggested privatisation of fertiliser production and increase in the prices of urea and other fertilisers at par with international prices, to make the domestic market more competitive and to remove market imperfections.

The study on 'Fertiliser Situation in Bangladesh: With an Emphasis on Urea' under the * USAID funded "Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDP). also predicted that the country may need to import urea by 1997-98 as the government has no plan to increase urea production in the country by the year 2000

The study, under the Ministry of Agriculture and conducted by the International Fertiliser Development Corporation (IFDC), said that during last years' fertiliser crisis smuggling out of urea did not take place on any significant

"Indeed, in crisis periods there seems to have been significant smuggling of urea from India," said the report.

The report confirmed that there was a secondary fertiliser market in the mill gates which was an outcome of the government policy and was

4 AL leaders

From Page 1

Hazaribagh Industrial Area in protest of the arrest and threatened to shut down the tannery industry unless Bhuiyan was immediately re-

Talukdar Sarwar Hossain, DCC Commissioner of Ward 37, Tejgaon, and a member of Jubo League Central Committee, was arrested at 2:30 am Monday.

Two other AL leaders, MA Salam, President, Tejgaon Thana AL, and Mostaque Hossain, Allen, President, Ward No 40 AL, were arrested from there homes in the early hours of Monday. They have been given a one-

month detention order and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail. Condemning the arrests, leaders of local Awami League and its front organisations have demanded their immediate re-

Manju From Page 1

streets in the continuing noncooperation programme. Manju claimed that the opposition enjoyed the confidence of the people.

The JP leader said that although the political crisis originated from a minister's iemark about the Opposition, the anti-government agitation took a popular form following the controversial Magura by-

ruter enjoying voting rights for the first time in the 1991 general elections, people would not accept anything less, he added. That is why the non-cooperation with the government is going on successfully without pickets."

Replying to a question on the Opposition's future course of action, the JP leader said, his party strongly believed in a constitutionally legitimate movement. "But our future course would be determined in the light of the next government

When asked whether a law adopted in the sixth Parliament providing for a non-party caretaker administration would eventually satisfy the opposition, Manju said, "Let the government come out with the

law first." Details of the interview will be published tomorrow.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali administered the oath of office to 38 MPs including 30 women members of the sixth Jatiya Sangsad at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. - PID photo

Avalanche claims 35 in Pak-held Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Mar 18. Snow and rain forced authorities to suspend rescue operadons today for people caught in an avalanche in Pakistaniheld Kashmir which official sources said had killed at least 35 people, reports Reuter.

The sources said 35 bodies and four survivors had been found in the debris after the avalanche hit a remote mountain hamlet on Friday night. The death toll could rise.

they added. "Heavy snow and rain are preventing military and civilian rescue teams from continuing their search," Mohammad Akram Sohail, deputy commissioner in Muzaffarabad. told Reuters.

Mirpur clash From Page 1

pm found the road connecting Sections 10 and 12 blocked by trees and tyres burning.

Witnesses said a large number of ambulances were seen picking up the injured people to the private clinics since the afternoon. One Abdul Mannan was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College-Hospital with bullet injury.

Police force was reinforced in Mirpur area. Police in riot gear was seen patrolling the area last night.

Chase and counter chase between the rival political activists were also reported from Bangabandhu Avenue, Demra, Shankar, Farmgate and Mahakhali areas. Witnesses said. these clashes left at least 15 people injured.

River transports keeping city alive now

Star Report

The age old river transport system is keeping the city alive as most of the daily necessities are reaching the capital by its surrounding waterways during the opposition's ongoing noncooperation programme.

In the absence of all kinds of mechanised road transpor throughout the country essentials such as, fish, poultry, fruits, vegetables, rice and other commodities are being transported into the city from different parts of the country using the river boats.

At the main river port along the Buriganga river, fleets of country boats are seen every day now, loaded with essentials for delivery in the wholesale markets along the river.

Traders at Sadarghat, Swarighat, Badamtoli, Babubazar Waizghat and Imamgani said that Supplies for the city's kitchen markets have been maintained as many suppliers took to river transports for transportation of goods in during the Opposition pro-

"This way suppliers even from far flung areas in northern districts are reaching our markets with commodities including rice" said Ismail Siddique, a rice trader at Badam-

This water transport sys-

tem has been the lifeline of the capital for centuries and now i is helping the city dwellers to survive," said Md Habibullah. an elderly businessman at Waizghat. Once the supplies reach the wholesale markets retailers take those to differ ent city markets on rickshaws and rickshawvans early in the morning everyday.

At Mirpur, a small riverport on the bank of the river Turag. many countryboats are seen bringing in vegetables from surrounding villages.

Some of the boatmen there said that although the river transport took more time it was less costly and free from many 'hazards', common nowadays on the roads.

"Moreover we can keep the vegetables fresh by sprinkling river water on them during the journey," said a boatman who came with pumpkins from village in Keranigani.

But cattle traders at the country's largest cattle market at Gabtali expressed their disappointment at the supply o cattle in the market. Supply of cattle has fallen from average 5000 a day to about 1500 now

a trader said. Indian cattle made the bulk of the supply which has dwindled because trucks are not plying, he said.



Businessmen of Nitaiganj Bazar in Narayanganj brought out a procession in the town yesterday protesting extor tionism. -- Star photo

JS session

From Page 1

sources said. Meanwhile, BNP sources said last night the non-party caretaker bill has been finalised and is ready for printing after completion of necessary formalities.

The parliament session begins with 320 members including 30 women MPs. Elections could not be held in 10 constituencies due to violence and other reasons.

New cabinet

From Page 1 Members of the new cabinet are likely to take oath at a simple ceremony at the Bangabhaban at 10 this morn-

Earlier, President Abdur Rahman Biswas would re-appoint Begum Zia as the new Prime Minister and she would form her new cabinet shortly afterwards. The PM and her cabinet colleagues would then take oath.

Begum Zia, at a lengthy meeting with top party leaders last night, discussed, among other issues, formation of the new cabinet. The meeting. held the PM's Teigaon office.

ended at around mid-night. The new cabinet is likely to be smaller than the present one, meeting sources said. Some of the incumbent ministers might be dropped while a few new faces were expected to be inducted into the new cabinet, the sources added.

Rabbani accuses US of abandoning Afghanistan

KABUL, Mar 18: President Burhanuddin Rabbani lashed out today at the United States, accusing Washington of abandoning Afghanistan after helping to drive out occupying Soviet forces, reports AP.

The American government ignores Afghanistan, they ignore the bloodshed." Rabbani told reporters in the capital Kabul. "The Americans look at the fighting in Afghanistan like it was a football game."

Rabbani and a number of Afghan leaders have long held that the United States turned its back on Kabul after the 1980s war against the Russians.

For more than 10 years, Afghanistan was the site of a brutal proxy war between the West and the former Soviet Union, during which more than a million people were killed.

Washington and its western allies supplied arms and helped finance Afghanistan's mujahedeen resistance fighters who ousted the Russians in 1989 and later toppled Kabul's communist government. After the collapse of the

Afghan communist regime in 1992, the resistance forces splintered and turned their guns on each other. Civil war rages on today, seven years after the Russians left. "I'm surprised that since

the Russians fell, the

Americans have forgotten

Afghanistan." Rabbani said.

"The Americans are responsible for the current situation." Bilateral aid to Afghanistan from Washington has all but disappeared and the United States has little direct contact with Kabul.

Reluctant to single out any one of the warring factions, the United States insists its interests in Afghanistan are represented through the United. Nations peace efforts.

Last year, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin Raphel said the United States was eager to see a stable government in Kabul, in part to help curb the spread of terrorism and the drug trade. Afghanistan is one of the

world's largest suppliers of

heroin. Shantibahini man surrenders

diesel at Tk 20 per litre. Pes-BANDARBAN, Mar 18: U Chticides like Phuradon sell at ing Pru Marma, 25, a member of outlawed Shantibahini, surrendered to Balipara BDR camp here yesterday along with one SMG and 29 rounds of ammunition, reports BSS.

Feud and internal clash within the Shantibahini and government's offer to award different facilities have inspired him to surrender and return to normal life, Marma

BNP-AL clash in Rajbari: 10 hurt

RAJBARI, Mar 18: At least 10 people were injured, two with bullets, in a clash between the BNP and Opposition supporters here today, reports

(Chhoto), both said to be BNP activists, were struck with bullet in the fighting. Kashem was sent to Faridpur Hospital while Razzak admitted to Rajbari Sadar Hospital.

. Awami League leaders claimed. BNP activists attacked their procession injuring four of their supporters. Police said the clash ensued at railgate when two processions - one of the Awami League and another of BNP - confronted. Awami League brought out

procession in support of the non-cooperation programme while BNP in protest. During chase and counter-

chase for half an hour, several gunshots were fired and bombs blasted.

Dacoity in Dhanmondi

By Staff Correspondent Unidentified gang exploded crackers in a house at Moneshwar road under Dhanmondi thana and robbed cash and valuable worth about Tk one lakh yesterday evening.

The owner of the house was partially injured in the attack The incident was sequel to previous enmity, police said. A group of about 20 people entered the house blasting at least six crackers. They also set fire inside the house when

Moon sighting body meets tomorrow

they left the scene, police

sources said.

The National Moon Sighting Committee will hold a meeting at the conference room of the central office o the Islamic Foundation tomor row at 7:15 pm, reports BSS. The meeting will be held on the occasion of sighting of

the moon of the Hijri month of Zilkad. State Minister for Religious Affairs and president of National Moon Sighting Committee Al-Haj Prof M A Mannan will preside over the

meeting. Anyone sighting the Zilkad moon within Bangladesh territory has been requested to contact the Islamic Foundation over the following telephone - 9559493 numbers 9559693, 9556407, 9555951 9555947, 9550280 and 9558337

Mass hunger strike for solution to political impasse

CHUADANGA, Mar 18: A mass hunger strike demanding immediate solution of the nagging political impasse over caretaker issue was staged at the district press club today. reports UNB.

Chuadanga Theatre, a cultural organisation, led the 12hour protest that started at 9 am with some 100 people fast

The hunger-strikers include artistes, litterateurs, lawyers, teachers, intellectuals, journalists and business-

Salman's appeal to President

Salman F Rahman, President, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) appealed to President Abdur Rahman Biswas to rise to the need of the hour and save the country from ruination, reports BSS.

In a statement last night Salman said "There was still time to prevent further damage if the President were to make reference to the Supreme Court," which he opined "could have led to a face-saving solution for both

Expressing great disappointment he said that the President ignored the appeal of the business community to refer the matter to the Supreme Court to resolve the present political crisis. Salman observed that his (President's) calling of parliament session on March 19 "had unfortunately completely failed in meeting the aspirations of those citizens and business people who had looked in him to resolve the crisis and ease their suffering."

Gherao From Page 1

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina for the crisis as they failed to resolve their political dispute. They also burnt effigies of the two leaders.

The angry farmers earlier gathered at the Chuadanga bas stand in the morning. Krishak Sangram Samity and Jatiya Ganotantrik Front organised the protest.

They later submitted a memorandum to the DC for arranging fertiliser, pesticides and diesel at fair price. Urea fertiliser now sells here at Tk 400 per bag while

Tk 60 a bottle, up from Tk 40. A protest meeting was also held in front of old DC office where leaders of Krishak Sangram Samity - central committee president Master Eman Ali, district unit convenor Azizur Rahman Salam, Advocate Abdul Malek and Golam Kibria Milon - and district unit president of Front backed Jatiya Chhatra Dal Selim Reza Khan spoke.

The Midnight Rife

50 killed in Manila fire

MANILA, Mar 18: At least 50 people were killed in a fire that broke out in suburban Manila shortly after midnight, local radio station Dzmm reported today. Philippines police confirmed four deaths. The fire started at 12:30 am (1630 gmt), police said, adding that more than 300 people were inside the disco, mostly students celebrating the end of the school year, reports AFF.

Tibetans protest HR abuse in China:

KATHMANDU, Mar 18: At least one hundred Tibetan activists and members of Amnesty International-Nepal were arrested today during protests over human rights abuses in China, police and Amnesty sources said, reports

dred people were detained but police put the figure at only 100 and said most would be released later today. The demonstrators, who

included Tibetan refugees living in Nepal, were rounded up as they tried to march on the Chinese embassy here to deliver a protest memorandum over human rights abuses in China, the sources said. Police took away at least 10

van loads of activists. Amnesty sources also said three of its officials were arrested in Kathmandu on Sunday for organising a signature campaign against China's human rights abuses.

Lankan HC's gratitude

By Staff Correspondent

thanked all those who sent messages of congratulation on

sonal gratitude to all Bangladeshis and other cricket lovers, who supported the Sri Lankan Cricket team from the very beginning of the tournament.

in winning the World Cup. "It is indeed very touching to feel the spontaneous warmth of the Bangladeshis from

Flood

From Page embankment at points yesterday morning, hundreds of vilagers including women rushed alongwith spades to save the embankment. They wor-

ked the whole day. The early flash flood has badly hit the Boro, wheat and other crops in these areas. However, the extent of loss caused by the flash floods. could not be ascertained immediately.

Vessel sinks

From Page 1 channel between the port and the outer anchorage at about 2 am. The mishap occurred while the vessel was unloading cement clinker from an incoming ship, MV Yanda.

The clinker was brought by MV Yanda for the Mongla Cement Factory at Mongla. Port sources said the sunken cargo vessel had endangered the channel which was already hit by navigability problems. Arrival of ships at the port would be threatened

if the capsized vessel is not

salvaged and the clinker re-

moved immediately, they

BNP, Opposition blamed for crisis

Garments workers at a rally in the city yesterday blamed the ruling BNP and the opposition parties for the country's

present political crisis, reports The garments sector is now on the verge of collapse due to the government's failure to settle the crisis and the Opposition's irresponsible politics, leaders of the National Garments Workers Federation

They urged all concerned to take infliative for smooth running of garments factories in the greater interest of the country's economy and 12 lakh garments workers. The NGWF leaders also de-

(NGWF) told the rally.

of the BNP government to resolve the staggering political crisis, said a press release. Presided over by Rahima Begum, the rally was addressed, by NGWF leaders

manded immediate resignation

Mojibur Rahman, Amirul Haq Amin and Shafia Parveen. Ctg port From Page 1

products, port sources said. Meanwhile, port officials said that no gang-booking of dock labourers was stafted till late in the evening. Port sources said three of

tankers moved out and one oil

tanker entered the berth today as workers were not required to handle those tankers. No movement or work was done in the cargo vessels stuck up at the port jetties and outer anchorage, port sources said. Meanwhile, witnesses said

afternoon. No easualty was reported. Normal life was disrupted in the port city for the 10th consecutive day today following

cooperation programme. All business activities came to a halt at the commercial centres of the city. Trading houses were shut, mills and factories did not operate. Shops, markets and offices were closed. All kinds of motorised vehicles staved off the

Magic forecast

From Page 1 then read it out to the eager and enthusiastic audience in the VIP lounge of the Press

The prediction read: Sri Lanka will be the champions. They will win by more than 25 runs if they bat first or by 6/7 wickets if they go for fielding first. The forecast said the Lankans might go for fielding first. Jayasuryia's fate may be disastrous, Arvinda de Silva

From Page 1

below 300 crore. Fifteen fire brigade teams

trol after several hours of frantic efforts.

cordoned off the area. BDR sources said they were searching for the Indian trucker whose stove allegedly

Hasina: Refer to SC

From Page 1

goes into its inaugural session. AL leaders at the rally urged the people to observe Black Day' today and attend a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club at 2 pm to be addressed by

Bhaban today, as the House

Reading out various some clauses from the Constitution. Hasina brought allegations of violation of the Constitution by Begum Khaleda Zia and said. "According to Article 57 of the Constitution, the post of the Prime Minister is now lying vacant. Expenses made from the national exchequer for the government of Khaleda Zia after February 21 does not have any sanction from the people and she will be made

Charging her (PM) with violating the Constitution on various counts, the AL president 71 of the Constitution.

as a member of Parliament from Feni-1 constituency when the election in Feni-2, another constituency the PM was con-

"How can she (Begum Zia). even not becoming an MP, go for forming a cabinet today?"

Hasina asked.

day Aimit and noted that election to 10 seats could not held The AL chief said that after

the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the night of August 15, 1975, the people lost their basic rights one after another and the party which came to power after the people's triumph over autocratic regime in 1990 also betrayed their hopes and aspira-

The rally was also ad-Jalil, Mohammad Nasim. Mozaffar Hussain Paltu, Begum Matiya Chowdhury, city AL President Mohammad Hanif and Secretary Mofazzal Hussain Chowdhury Maya and Jubo League Chairman Sheikh Fazlul

government has lost confidence of the people. Tofael Ahmed said the

people would not recognise any law or bill passed by the sixth Parliament also Mayor of Dhaka, expressed

and demanded their release. "Within the next five days I will organise a citizen's rally in this Obaidul Kader, who con-

ducted the rally, later said the city AL would hold a rally on March 23 in front of the Jatiya

Press Club.

Abul Kashem and Razzak

100 held in Nepal

Local Amnesty president Charan Prasai, director Krishna Kandel and a former president Krishna Pahadi were among those arrested, the sources said.

Amnesty said several hun-

The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Bangladesh has the victory of Sri Lanka in the World Cup Cricket tournament He also conveyed his per-

He said that their encouragement and solidarity strengthened the will and confidence of the Sri Lankan team

all walks of life; not only in our moment of triumph, but also in despair", the High Commissioner said in a press

roads and highways.

will be the man-of-the-match.

Benapole

Local administration de-

caused the fire.

lami - demanded cancellation of the February 15 polls and plan to gherao the Sangsad

Sheikh Hasina.

accountable for that.

said, "The post of PM, Begum Zia is holding now, do not have any legitimacy as per Article Quoting from sub-clauses of Article 71, Hasina questioned, "How could she (PM) take oath

testing from, was yet to be

Hasina alleged that the Con-

stitution was violated as polling

that there were sporadic bomb blasts at Agrabad commercial area and Saltgola crossing this

the Opposition-sponsored non-

Silva máy score a century.

from Jessore and nearest districts, including Narail and Satkhira, and firefighters of the air force base in Jessore rushed to Benapole and brought the blaze under con-

clared section 144 in the godown area this afternoon to prevent loot. Police and BDR

to all the 300 seats could not be completed within the 90-

dressed by AL leaders Abdul Mannan, Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Amir Hussain Amu, Tofael Ahmed. Abdul

Karim Selim. Abdus Samad Azad said the

Mohammad Hanif, who is concern at the arrest of at least four ward commissioners

regard", he said