

Body to review problems in health sector

The government has formed a high-level committee to review the structural problems in the Health and Family Welfare sector and make necessary recommendations on its organisational and managerial aspects, reports BSS.

Health and Family Welfare Minister will be the president of the committee while parliament member and former secretary Khandaker Asaduzzaman will be executive vice-president, an official handout said yesterday.

The other members of the committee are: Former secretary Nurunnabi Chowdhury, Cabinet Secretary, Establishment Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Secretary, Finance Secretary, Managing Director of Grameen Bank Prof. Dr M Yunus, Director of IBA (Institute of Business Administration), Dhaka University, Adviser of BIRDEM Prof A K Azad, Executive Director of BRAC Fazle Hasan Abed, Executive Director of Ganoshasthya Kendro Dr A Kashem Chowdhury, Managing Director of Kumudini Welfare Trust Mrs. Jayapati, Chairman of Continental Hospital Limited Dr M M Hossain and Joint Chief of

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Outline of 4-tier local govt drafted

Local Government Commission drafted the outline of a four-tier local government at a meeting at Sangsab Bhaban yesterday, said a press release.

Chairman of the Commission Advocate M Rahmat Ali presided over the meeting attended by its members Kazi Azhar Ali, A T M Shamsul Haq, Dr Borhan Uddin Khan Jahanian and member-secretary AHM Abdul Hy.

Prisoner dies in Ctg jail

By Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 13: An under-trial prisoner identified as Abul Hossain, died in Chittagong jail at around 2.30 am last night, official sources said.

Jail officials claimed that Hossain died a normal death. Hossain was being held in Chittagong jail as an under-trial prisoner charged in a murder case.

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by A K N Ahmed

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Knitwear export orders shrinking since Nov

By Inam Ahmed

Orders for knitwear from foreign buyers are shrinking since November last year after the European Community sounded alarm on abuse of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facility by Bangladesh, sending shivers down the spine of the manufacturers of one of the main export items of the country's garments sector.

"We are seldom receiving queries from foreign buyers these days," a leading exporter, preferring anonymity, said while explaining the situation that has arisen since the EC tightened the GSP facilities allowing readymade garments from developing countries duty free entry to the EC countries.

It followed EC complaints of abuse of GSP facilities through

fraudulent means prompting the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) to tighten the issuing of certificate of origin since the last week of January.

The EPB also formed a committee to scrutinise and assess the GSP applications, something the manufacturers complained has thrown them off-balance after sustaining the past two years of political tumult before the spring demands for knitwear in the West.

Foreign buyers have squeezed orders since the EC began investigations and submitted reports in October, the exporter said.

Knitwear constitutes the bulk of Bangladeshi readymade garments exports to the EC.

The manufacturers are also confused about what price they will negotiate for the transition period of two to three months.

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Ekushey fair opens Wednesday

600 new books may reach the readers

By Staff Correspondent

At least 600 new books with a number of those on politics and the Liberation War are expected to reach the readers at the 'Ekushey Book Fair '97' beginning at the Bangla Academy premises in the city on Wednesday.

Six publishing houses will form a 'creative publishers' guild', the first of its kind for promoting creative literature, science and technology, and display new books at the biggest book fair in the country.

Talking to The Daily Star, a group of publishers in the city's Bangabazar area said that a record number of 100 books on politics, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Liberation War have already been printed or are in the process of being printed for the Ekushey Fair.

"Publishers feel encouraged as a pro-liberation party came to power after a long time and the nation was observing 'Silver Jubilee' of its independence," said Milan Nath, Director of the Bangladeshi Publishers and Book Sellers' Association.

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Toll collection in the name of 'Eid bonus'

By Staff Correspondent

A group of people forcibly collected 'Eid bonus' from every vehicle that moved out of Sayeedabad bus terminal and those passing through Jatrabari crossing the eve of Eid holidays on February 6, passengers said.

They told The Daily Star that some youths identifying themselves as collectors from a trade union levied Tk 300 for each passenger coach, Tk 200 for mini or micro-buses and Tk 25 for every other automobile.

It delayed the Eid holidaymakers bound for their homes in southeastern Bangladesh for hours.

The collectors were there at every point en route to Chittagong, a senior government official, who travelled in a bus owned by an influential Awami League leader, said.

It all happened in the presence of police. Even a senior police official, a co-passenger of the civil servant, watched the proceedings and tried to prompt the driver of the coach to ignore the collectors.

"Sir, they will always be there. I may defuse them now. But I have to return back to Dhaka and make another trip to Chittagong. If they damage the vehicle, for example smash the glass throwing a stone, the owner

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of the 600 new books, a good number will be novel, collection of poems short stories, etc., according to the publishers.

Besides there will be books on popular science and other subjects.

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By Staff Correspondent

Ahsanullah Moni, owner of Hotel Razmoni Isha Kha and the Razmoni Cinema Complex and an accused in two separate cases of assaulting officials of the Taxation Department, surrendered at the Ramna police station yesterday. Police at Ramna thana said that Moni surrendered at about 1 pm.

Later, he was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. He was sent to jail the same day as the bail petition moved on behalf of Moni was rejected by the court.

According to the police, Moni came to the thana alone and disclosed his identity.

Two separate cases were filed by the officials of the Taxation Department against Ahsanullah Moni on January 30, on charges of manhandling officials and issuing threats to their lives.

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PM orders speedy inquiry into death of Shima

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ordered speedy inquiry into the mysterious death of Seema Chowdhury in Chittagong Jail on Friday, reports UNB.

She gave the directive when a delegation of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha, led by its Chairman Ivy Rahman, called on her at the PM office yesterday and expressed concern over the sudden death of Seema in judicial custody.

The Prime Minister assured that the appropriate action would be taken against the persons responsible soon after the investigation.

She said legal action will also be taken against those who harassed and raped Seema in Raiganj police station on October 9 last year.

The government is determined to take stern action against repression on women, she added.

Triangular cricket India 47/1 in six overs

Sports Reporter

In order to get bids the government had planned two international roundtables in July last inviting multinational oil companies. Due to various reasons these roundtables scheduled to have been held in London and Houston were deferred. It is now proposed to be held sometime in March.

Experts and officials feel that investment in the energy sector is fundamentally different from investments in other sectors due to its sophisticated technical nature. Therefore, See Page 12 Col 11



PAHELA FALGOON: Girls beautifying themselves on the first day of the Spring yesterday. — Star photo

Shahbazpur Gas Field

US company allowed to study dev plan bypassing rules

By Sharier Khan

The government signed a letter of intent on January 20 with a US company to allow it to study and submit a development plan for the Shahbazpur Gas field, bypassing its own rules, according to official sources.

A similar move is now being undertaken to sign an accord with another foreign company for exploration in Block No. 9, covering Kasba thana and Saldia area where Petrobangla's subsidiary BAPEX struck a gas field, competent sources said. Petrobangla had earlier submitted its own development plan for the Saldia gas field.

The Energy Ministry signed the one-year agreement with a US company under instruction from a high-level five-member committee for investment consisting of the Principal Secretary, Secretary to the Prime Minister and the ERD, Finance and Energy secretaries, the sources added.

This now leaves other for-

Khulna region.

The existing system of the government for negotiation and signing of agreement for exploration and development of gas field does not allow such unsolicited negotiations or agreements, the sources concerned said adding that from July last all new negotiations were suspended with a view to inviting bids for 15 open exploration blocks.

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A partial view of Shaheednagar slum in the city's Lalbagh area after the devastating fire late Wednesday night. — Star photo

One killed, 300 shanties gutted in Lalbagh

By Staff Correspondent

A devastating fire gutted some 300 shanties at a Lalbagh slum in the city early yesterday, leaving one person dead and more than one hundred others injured, reports UNB.

Police said a lighted mosquito coil sparked off the fire that engulfed the slum under the crossdam at Boubazar of Shahidnagar area at about 2 am.

Ten units of fire fighters from different stations in the city rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after two hours of struggle.

The dead was identified as Liton, 19, an inmate of the slum. A rickshaw van-puller, Liton was sleeping in a tiny

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Moni surrenders, court rejects his bail prayer

By Staff Correspondent

Ahsanullah Moni, owner of Hotel Razmoni Isha Kha and the Razmoni Cinema Complex and an accused in two separate cases of assaulting officials of the Taxation Department, surrendered at the Ramna police station yesterday. Police at Ramna thana said that Moni surrendered at about 1 pm.

Later, he was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. He was sent to jail the same day as the bail petition moved on behalf of Moni was rejected by the court.

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By Staff Correspondent

parliamentary elections.

It said the June 12 general election, through which Awami League had assumed power, was held in continuity of February 15 polls that led to the parliamentary provision for a caretaker government. Thus, February 15 should be observed as the day for "preserving democracy and Constitution."

The meeting was made in a resolution adopted at a joint meeting of the leaders of the party's front organisations. Party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan presided over the meeting at the BNP central office.

In the resolution, the party resented the "failure and dilly-dallying attitude" of the government in implementing the agreement which paved the way for BNP's return to Parliament after few weeks of abstention.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Abdullah Al Noman, Nazrul Islam Khan, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, MP, Amanullah Aman, MP, Goreshwar Roy, Shahjahan Siraj, Kabir Murad, Fazlul Huq Milon, Redwan Ahmed, Rezabuddou Chowdhury, Sirajul Islam Selim, Abul Khair Bhuiyan and Habibunisa So-

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IPU confce opens in Delhi today

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves here today for New Delhi on a three-day visit to participate in a specialised conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics" beginning in the Indian capital.

Dayal Sharma at the Rastrapati Bhavan in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, BSS Special Correspondent from New Delhi reports that the 5-day conference to be inaugurated at the Vigyan Bhavan is expected to be attended by some 250 MPs from nearly 80 countries and experts from international and non-governmental organisations.

The working sessions of the conference will be held at the Vigyan Bhavan International Conference Centre tomorrow. The MPs and experts from all over the world are meeting to trade ideas on how to achieve a