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## Govt urges Thai authorities not to

By Staff Correspondent The government is learnt to have conveyed to Thai authorities its concern about the holding of an international peace conference on Chittagong Hill Tracts, sponsored by the nongovernment organisations (NGOs), in Bangkok, according to official sources.

While conveying a request not to encourage holding of the

Peace Conference on Chittagong Hill Tracts" was due to begin vesterday in the Thai capital Sources in the Foreign Ministry said that according to information received by them the conference did not begin as sched-

See Page 12 Col 3

### Hardinge Bridge to be made suitable for vehicular traffic

By Mizan Ali

Work on the project, involving Tk 25 crore, has already been initiated with the help of civil and military engineers, the source added. Army engi-

ject were carried out since the late 70s.

the slippers on both sides of the rail track to make the bridge The same system was intro-

duced in the Teesta Railway Bridge in '78-'79.

four additional judges to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court for a two-year term, reports UNB.

Gopal Shaha, Advocate Awlad Registrar of the Supreme Court Mohammad Ali Asgar Khan, said an official announcement vesterday

It said the President had given the appointment in consultation with the Chief Justice as per the Article 98 of the Con-

#### - Inside Today —

#### Speaker and the Constitution

Pakistan

Lines by Kuldip Nayar Page 4

Proved that Microcredit Works' -The Daily Star on return from the Page 5

#### International

Pak govt asked to provide security for cultural centres of Iran Page 8

### Business

Bangladesh offers maximum trade

DSE index registers 41-point fall

Pages 6, 7

# Bill passed empowering govt to defer UP polls

**FALGOON 12 1403 BS.** 

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed a bill empowering the government to defer the Union Parishad elections to a

government may, by notification in the official gazette,

Before the passage of the bill,

4461 Union Parishads, would expire on February 28, the tenure of some of the remaining Parishads would expire in April and May. "But there would be problems to hold the polls in April or May due to monsoon and inclement weather.

1 "Besides, we have to defer the SSC and HSC examinations scheduled to be held at that time, which the government is unwilling to do," the minister said. "On top of all, we have come up with the amendment with a view to giving perfection to the existing law by adding a provision that would keep a scope for holding the polls if for any reason, the elections could not be held within a spe-

See Page 12 Col 5

#### Tofael tells JS 3000 MTs urea to remain in stock after meeting demand

By Staff Correspondent Industries and Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that there was no scarcity of fertiliser in the country and that it was being sold at below-normal price.

He informed the House that 30,000 metric tons (MT) of urea would remain in stock at the end of the current Rabi season in April next after meeting the demand for 3,45,000 MT in March.

The Industries Minister was giving a statement on some notices the Chair received from a number of Opposition Bench MPs on fertiliser situation. Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid gave Tofael the floor to make his statement under Article 300 of the JS Rules of Procedure. · Tofael's statement raised

#### Covert clinical trial of sterilisation method

of sterilisation, was being con of women's organisations in the city vesterday.

of McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women a McGill University in Montreal they were participating in a

See Page 12 col 6

### 3 Bangladeshis killed in Jaipur bus accident

ports BSS.

turned at Dodo.

The dead were identified as Syeda Jebunnesa, 48, of 40/1 Jorpur Lane, Sutrapur, Dhaka, Tahmina Habib, 40, of 82 Nawabpur Road, Dhaka and Utpal Banik. 28, of 5, Vajahari Shaha Street, Dhaka.

were brought to New Delhi for sending them to Dhaka, the official said.

#### Ravi Shankar arrives today

ports UNB.

He will perform in the city's Osmani Memorial Hall on Wednesday and Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Thursday, said a press release issued by the Indian High Commission here.

Anoushka Shankar, the talented teenage daughter of Pandit Ravi Shankar, will accompany her father on stage on the sitar and P T Kumar Bose on the tabla

## JS discusses President's speech

By Staff Correspondent The Treasury Bench in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday thanked President Shahabuddin Ahmed for giving guidelines to the government and highlighting it's successes and future plans through his address to the House while the Opposition Bench refused to accept the address as one by an outspoken person like Justice Shahabud-

The day's business began at 4 pm with discussion on the motion of vote of thanks on the presidential address after the tabling of questions-answers as per a decision of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC). Before the discussion

started, Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury told the House that the BAC decision was taken in view of little progress of the planned 20-hour

See Page 12 Col 5

## Over 200 devotees burnt alive, 500 hurt in Orissa

BHUBANESHWAR, (India). Feb 23: An inferno which blazed across a religious ceremony today killed more then 200 people and injured 500 others in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, AFP quoting officials and domestic agencies said.

SHAWAL 16 1417 HIJRI

Press Trust of India said "well over 200 Hindu devotees were burnt alive and 300 injured critically" in the late evening blaze.

State officials quoted by the

Officials said 120 bodies were recovered and about 200 policemen, Fire Brigade personnel and local workers were searching the debris in the hope of finding survivours.

The Home (interior) Secre-

tary of Orissa state, SC Hota. told Reuters in the state capital Bhubaneshwar that some 15,000 people were attending a religions conference in Baripada town when the blaze swept through thatched huts erected for the event.

He said strong winds fanned the fire, which broke out at about 3:30 pm (1000 GMT) and swiftly engulfed the camp in Baripada, 220 km (135 miles) north of the state capital. The cause of the fire was not

yet known, Hota-said. Most of the victims were

men napping after lunch at the national conference, dedicated to the memory of the Hindu Guru Nigamananda, Hota said.

### JN University student killed during gunfight

By DMC Correspondent

An honours examinee of Jagannath University College was killed and two others were injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire at Nakhalpara under Tejgaon thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

Ruhul Amin Sarker, 24, son of Siddiqur Rahman Sarker of Shahinbagh in Tejgaon, sustained fatal bullet injuries in his chest at about 12:45 pm. He died soon after admission to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources

The two injured were identified as Rabbi, 4, son of Md Montu and Jafar Imam Dilip, 25. Both of them were admitted to the DMCH with bullet injuries in their legs.

Ruhul Amin, a student of Accounting of Jagannath University College, was to sit for the Honours examination today. said DMCH sources quoting See Page 12 Col 3

#### Manzur Murder Case Showcause on govt for not granting bail to Col Shams

A Division Bench of the High Court yesterday issued rule upon the government to show cause within two weeks as to why the accused Lt Col (retd) Shamsur Rahman alias Shams shall not be granted bail in Manzur Murder Case, reports The bench comprised Justice

Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Shah Abu Naeem Mominur Rahman. The petitioner Lt Col (retd)

Shams was arrested on March 12, 1995 and since then he has been in custody.

Abul Munsur, brother of ex-Major General M A Manzur. lodged a case with Panchlaish police station. Chittagong on February 28, 1995 stating that his younger brother Major General M A Manzur was taken to army custody from police custody on June 1, 1981 and then was taken to Chittagong cantonment and there he was shot

See Page 12 col 6

#### Yasmin murder 5 more witnesses

cross-examined RANGPUR. Feb 23: Five more prosecution witnesses were cross-examined by the

District and Sessions Judge's Court here today. The witnesses are — Ahmed Ahsan Ali of Dhaka in whose house Yasmin worked as maid. Kamrul Arif Shah and Waheda

Khatoon of Dinajpur who sent Yasmin to their relative's house at Dhaka, Shariful Islam and Saifur Rahman of Dinajpur Daashmile. The District and Sessions

Judge Abdul Matin recorded the depositions.

### Woman trafficker held, 7 girls rescued

From Our Correspondent GAIBANDHA, Feb 23: Teestamukh ghat railway police rescued seven teenage girls from a women trafficker and sent them to Bonarpara thana yesterday. Police also arrested one Abul Hossain in this con-

According to police, the women trafficker. Abul Hossain along with seven teenage girls, was proceeding toward Narayanganj by the Ekota Intercity express. At the Teestamukh ghat, he took them to a See Page 12 Col 4

#### Over 100 shanties gutted in city

More than one hundred shanties were gutted in a fire at a city slum Saturday night, re-

ports UNB. Police said, the fire broke out at Lane No 18 of block A under Mirpur section 10 at about

11:30 pm on Saturday Ten fire brigade units rushed to the spot and put out the blaze after one and a half hours.

Sources at Pallabi thana said, a total of 112 thatched houses of the stranded Pakista-

nis were razed to the ground by the fire, the cause of which could not be known. Meanwhile, more than a

See Page 12 Col 1

#### New savings certificate scheme

The government introduced a new public borrowing instrument named 'saving certificate' with the facility of drawing half vearly profit at the rate of Tk 6,750 per lakh for six months, reports UNB.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria launched the five-year savings scheme handing over certificates to some of the in-

#### it was mandatory for a governperiod which would be specified ment to hold elections within by the government through 180 days before the expiry of the gazette notification. tenure of the Union Parishads. BNP lawmakers termed the The bill was passed by voice legislation a 'black law' and opvote with the BNP legislators posed passage of the bill, argustrongly opposing the spirit of ing that it was violative of a few the legislation. Two Jatiya provisions of the Constitution. Party MPs opposed the idea of The bill — the Local Government Union Parishads giving the government the power to 'defer the election for (amendment) Bill, 1997 - proan indefinite period, although posed that "where, for any reathey did not vote against the son, the elections cannot be held within the period" speci-However, defending the bill fied in the existing law, "that LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman election may be held within a told the House that the five-year period, after expiry of the term of the Union Parishad, as the term of seven, out of a total of BNP to launch movement

#### to realise demands making body, discussed impor-BNP will launch a mass

movement to realise reasonable demands and inalienable rights of the people of all classes and professions by making them more conscious of failure of the Awami League government in running the country, reports

The main opposition party's standing committee took this decision at an emergency meeting here on Saturday in view of countrywide "terrorism, repression, and anti-people, undemocratic and autocratic activities of the government."

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia presided over the

Expressing deep concern at the deteriorating law and order situation as well as political and socio-economic situation in the country, the meeting expressed resentment and condemnation over the silence and failure of the government.

The BNP standing committee, the party's highest policy-

Prince Charles of Britain

arrives here on February 26 on

a three-day goodwill visit to

Bangladesh that will give him

the opportunity to see British

funded projects, community

service schemes and off-shore

taking place against the back-

drop of the trip of British Prime

Minister John Major who came

ent to the British throne, is

widely considered an unofficial

ambassador of his country and

makes frequent visits abroad.

This is his first visit to

Bangladesh. Queen Elizabeth II.

his mother, however visited

after arrival by a special air-

craft of the Royal Air Force at

10:30 pm, will be received by

Charles, the Prince of Wales.

Bangladesh twice.

on Page 11)

Prince Charles, heir-appar-

to Dhaka only five weeks back.

The visit of the Prince is

gas exploration work.

tant national issues including the Chittagong Hill Tracts situation, share market, prices of crops and fertiliser, price hike of essentials and repression on opposition activists.

It blamed the government for resorting to dilly-dally practice in implementing the four-point agreement between the ruling and opposition parties, which was signed for smoothly conducting the parliamentary activities.

The meeting demanded early implementation of the agreement and immediate and unconditional release of leaders and workers of BNP. It also urged the government to stop repression and withdraw "false cases" against the partymen.

Condemning the government's failure in maintaining law and order, it observed that the death of Shima Chowdhury in Chittagong Jail and such other incidents proved that the government had failed to en-See Page 12 col 7

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad

Azad at the Zia International

Airport. He will be taken in a

motorcade to the British High

Commissioner's residence

stay, will make courtesy calls

on President Shahabuddin

Ahmed and Prime Minister

The Prince of Wales, accom-

Sheikh Hasina at their offices.

panied by Foreign Minister Ab-

dus Samad Azad, will fly to

Sylhet on February 27. There he

will inaugurate the British ODA

funded earth-satellite station.

He will also be guest at a recep-

tion to be hosted by the people

of Sylhet where he will ac-

quaint himself with their

problems. A large community

of Bangladeshis from Sylhet is

See Page 12 col 7

The Prince, on the same day,

living in Britain.

FINGER OF CONTROVERSY: Umpire Mahabubullah, one

of the two Bangladeshi umpires who officiated in yester-

day's match of the SAARC tourney between arch-rivals

India and Pakistan, rules Noel David out, caught behind

off Asif Mujtaba. The batsman definitely thought other-

wise and took a long time to leave the crease. This was

one of the two controversial decisions of the day. (Story

Star photo

Prince Charles, during his

where he would be staying.

Charles to visit projects,

gas exploration site

By M Anwarul Haq

# See Page 12 Col 1

By Staff Correspondent A covert clinical trial of Quinacrine, a chemical method ducted on a number of women from low income group in Chittagong region, alleged a Canadian professor and leaders

Prof Shree Mulay, Director Canada, said that the women on whom these trials were being conducted were not aware that clinical trial which has not been approved by any national

or international agency. She was presenting the keynote paper on "Covert Trials Overt Violations: The Case Against Quinacrine Method of Sterilisation" at a discussion

NEW DELHI, Feb 23: Three Bangladeshi nationals were killed and three others including a minor girl injured in a road accident at Dodo near Jaipur on Tuesday last, a Bangladesh High Commission official said here on Friday, re-

The accident occurred when the bus in which the victims were travelling on their way back after offering ziarat at the holy shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishty (RA) over-

The bodies of the victims

The Indian legendary sitarist and composer with international repute. Pandit Ravi Shankar, arrives in Dhaka today on a five-day visit at the invitation of the government, re-

### Jessore yesterday: 'Madhupalli' to be set up at

14 / Jan 19

Sagardari SAGARDARI (Jessore), Feb 23: Sagardari, the birthplace of famous poet Michael Madhusudhan Dutta, will be made a place of pilgrimage for literateurs from across the world, re-

ports UNB. The plan was unveiled by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while inaugurating a seven-day exhibition, 'Madhu Mela,' this morning at Sagardari on the occasion of 173rd birth anniversary of the great Bengali

"We want to turn the place into a tourist spot where literature-loving people from different parts of the world will throng," she said and named the planned resort 'Madhupalli'.

Hasina paid rich tributes to the late poet, saying Michael has enriched Bangla literature with his magnificent repertory, which include an epic — Meghnad Badh.

See Page 12 Col 8

## PM urges Opposition Maintain peace to

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at the Eidgah Maidan in

JESSORE, Feb 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged all opposition political parties to maintain the prevailing peace and stability in the

country to attract more foreign investors, reports UNB. "We could draw the attention of the foreign investors who have become eager to invest in the country and the opposition parties should not do anything that might destabilise this congenial investment climate," she

Addressing a huge public meeting at the local Eidgah maidan, the Prime Minister said political stability is a must for economic development of the country and all should try

their best to ensure that. The government, which is struggling for the economic

attract investment emancipation of the people, has already got investment offers to the tune of Tk 3,000 crore from

- PID photo

the meeting. Hasina said the activities of the new government could improve a lot the image of the nation. The nation's image was heavily damaged for the activities of the previous government, which the present government is mending gradually

the foreign investors, she told

The Prime Minister also attended a coordinating meeting on development activities and law and order.

Terrorists have no political identity, observed the Prime Minister directing the law-enforcing agencies to take stern action against the terrorists.

Referring to the historic See Page 12 Col 8

## Infighting delays take-off of admin reforms commission

By Shehab Ahmed

room, a car, chauffeur and per-

sonal officer. But others, in-

cluding mid-ranking officials,

who are to do the vital job of

Infighting between high officials has slowed down the work of the administrative reforms commission, formed in December last year to ensure 'efficient, transparent and accountable administration in the Twenty First Century, according to informed sources. The report is to be prepared within two years.

Despite allocation of nearly 45 lakh taka in this year's budget, the commission is yet to take off for lack of manpower, office space and other support, needed to sift through piles of documents and reports, including now in the cold storage Nurunnabi Committee Report on administrative reforms, prepared at a huge cost since 1993. Only the Chairman, former

Cabinet Secretary Ayubur

Rahman, has been given a

BEIJING, Feb 23: Top Chi-

nese leaders and family mem-

bers of Deng Xiaoping will

gather at a Beijing military

hospital tomorrow to pay their

final respects before his body is

cremated, sources said today,

Communist Party veterans and

members of the official 459-

member funeral committee.

will take part in the simple cer-

emonies at 9:00 am (0100 GMT)

at Beijing's 301 hospital, where

Deng's body has been kept since

his death on Wednesday.

About 100 people, including

reports Reuter.

scanning the dusty files, are yet to be given proper space to func-Even out of four senior assistant secretaries, two are yet to be seconded to the commission. The Chairman, who retired

in September last year as cabinet secretary, sent a few names for appointment, considering what he felt their background and training. But his one time junior officer, Shafiur Rahman. Establishment Secretary under whose umbrella the commission is functioning, felt otherwise. A difference of opinion has emerged as to the people to be recruited for the work.

Sources said they will make

traditional bows of respect be-

fore the leader's corpse, which

will then be carried by military

pallbearers to a hearse from

where it will be taken to the

Babaoshan Cemetery, 2.5 km to

the west along Changan boule-

vard, which cuts through cen-

that his corneas be donated to

fered for medical research, also

asked that his remains be cre-

mated with no public display of

an eye bank and his body of-

Deng's family, who asked

tral Beijing, for cremation.

the body.

Recently, the two had altercation over the virtual nonfunctioning of the commission. But the retired boss was reportedly given the thumb by the establishment secretary, the sources said. The commission is yet to have two research officers and a

the senior assistant secretaries. As a retired secretary and a joint-secretary joined it earlier. Apart from bickerings, the commission so far had two meetings to outline its methodology of work, but failed to start full fledged business.

statistical officer apart from

It also advertised for office space in central Dhaka. But is yet to select proper sites. No computer or vehicles have been procured nor visits

See Page 12 Col 4 Deng to be cremated today

The leader's ashes will then be transported to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing's Tiamanmen Square.

Traffic along the route will be restricted, and only selected people will be allowed to line the streets to express their grief, the sources said. Authorities imposed tight security around the capital and

especially in Tiamanmen

Square, the vast central space

where the country will com-

memorate Deng with official

memorial rites at the Great Hall

of the People on Tuesday.

vestors at his office yesterday. See Page 12 Col 2

# encourage holding of confce on CHT

conference, the government has informed the Thai authorities that it was trying intensely to solve the CHT problems. Holding of such a meeting now might jeopardise the peace process it pointed out, the sources added. The 4-day "International

The government has decided to make the Hardinge Bridge suitable for vehicular traffic, according to an authoritative source in the Ministry of Communications.

neers will be engaged for construction of the approach roads. The project is likely to be completed by the end of this year. Several studies on the pro-

Steel sheets will be laid on suitable for vehicular traffic.

4 addl HC judges appointed The President has appointed

They are Advocate Goura Ali, Advocate Zakir Ahmed and

stitution.

# Article

by Nazim Kamran Choudhury Ten Days in Column: Between the

## Focus

'Bangladesh has Prof Yunus talks to Microcredit Summit

Political storm appears to be brewing in Israel

incentives in Asia, Tofael tells UK team