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The World on Time

Govt to build up strong Ansar-VDP force: PM

SHAFIPUR (Gazipur), Feb 26: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today expressed her government's determination to build up an organised and strong Ansar-VDP force to establish a poverty and hunger-free Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"We want the Ansar-VDP men to be the helping hands as we have started struggle against poverty and hunger and taken up programmes to eradicate illiteracy from the country within next ten years," she told a national convention of Ansar-VDP at Shafipur Ansar Academy.

Hasina said members of the traditional auxiliary force are the workers of peace and development. They can play an effective role in reaching the fruits of government's development programmes to the people.

With a target of economic development of rural people, the Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) men can integrate themselves further in the process of implementing different economic activities of the rural people, she said.

The Prime Minister said the members of the Ansar-VDP can help the rural people implement the programmes of dairy farming, poultry, small and cottage industries, public health, afforestation and nutrition. "You can motivate the

people to have small families for the welfare of the nation," she added.

Hasina said, "We want peace and discipline across the country. Without peace and security, expected development would not be possible." She asked the Ansars to work boldly and sincerely to maintain peace and security of the people.

Recalling the contribution of Ansars during the War of Liberation, she said, "Ansars like other forces fought for independence at the call of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Pakistani occupation forces dissolved the Ansar for taking part in the Liberation War, she added.

Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed awards to those who gave the guard of honour to the Mujibnagar government. Among the 12 Ansars, two died and rest ten took the awards from the Prime Minister. Sons of the late Ansars received their awards.

The Prime Minister also handed over different awards to the members of Ansar-VDP for their contribution in various fields.

Home Minister Maj (retd) Rafiqul Islam and Director General of Ansar (Additional charge) Brig Mohammad Enayet Hossain were present at the podium during the parade.

Load shedding

Narsingdi power offices attacked

NARSINGDI, Feb 26: At least 15 people, including three policemen, were injured in a clash between local people and police in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Police said the clash began at about 1 pm when several hundred people, including powerloom workers, attacked Palli Bidyut and DESA offices here, protesting frequent load shedding in the area.

The mob fought a fierce battle with police as they lobbed teargas shells to disperse the mob.

Traffic on Dhaka-Sylhet highway was disrupted for about an hour.

ALPP

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A Whip told The Daily Star that the ALPP leader had warned at the meeting that she would not spare any member of her cabinet or of the party if one proved to be mentor of terrorists.

She lauded the lawmakers' role in ensuring proper marketing and availability of fertiliser and sought similar cooperation from them for containing violence and terrorist activities.

Earlier, in an introductory speech Abul Hasnat Abdullah, on behalf of all party deputies, congratulated Sheikh Hasina for introducing Prime Minister's question time in the Jatiya Sangsad. He urged his party colleagues to be more sincere about timely attendance in the House as he pointed out, primarily it was the Treasury Bench's responsibility to ensure quorum that time was not wasted.

The meeting was informed that in the current session of the Sangsad, 12 bills were passed and four others were under process. Out of a total of 74 hours 50 minutes time of the current session so far, Treasury Bench members were given 27 hours 52 minutes, Opposition Bench members 35 hours 54 minutes while the Chair got 11 hours four minutes.

A party deputy said officials and sepoys of the armed forces, who were fired "unfairly" from their services, should be rehabilitated and their cases could be re-examined for the sake of justice.

The MPs who spoke at the meeting are, Col (retd) Shakhat Ali, AKM Shafullah, Begum Monnojan Sufian, Aleya Afroz, Dr Mokhsheen Rahman, Sayed Ashraful Islam, Tajul Islam, Prof Md Ali, Md Shahabuddin, Abdul Latif Mirza, Abdus Sattar, Zillul Hakim, Rezaul Haq Hira, Abul Kalam Azad and Emdadul Haq Bhuiyan.

The meeting was followed by a luncheon hosted by Sheikh Hasina.

Union Parishad

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Bangladesh Gazette on February 24 for general information, the announcement said.

The announcement, however, did not mention anything about the dates for holding elections to the remaining 93 Union Parishads.

The ruling party had a law passed in the Jatiya Sangsad on February 23 that empowered the government to hold polls to the Union Parishads at any time, announced through gazette notification.

Before the passage of the law, it was an obligation for the government to hold elections within 180 days before the expiry of the tenure of the Union Parishads.

Others who presented papers on the theme include Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Raushan Jahan and Lala Rukh Selim from Bangladesh and Prof Durga P Bhandary from Nepal. Dr VA Pali Panandikar and Sonal Mansingh acted as moderators. The dialogue concludes today.

Chief Imam of Masjid-e-Nabubi arrives in city

The Chief Imam and Khatib of Masjid-e-Nabubi in Medina Munawara Allama Dr Sheikh Ali-Bin Abdur Rahman Al-Hozaini arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a seven day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Mohammad Nurul Islam and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abu Hasan Chowdhury and Saudi Ambassador Abdurrahman Barry received the distinguished guest at the airport.

Former state minister for Religious Affairs Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaigubadi, MP, a large number of ulamas and high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Saudi Embassy were also present.

According to a press release issued by the Sobhannbagh Masjid and Madrassah Managing Committee, the Imam will conduct Magrib prayers today at Dhanmondi club field. Later he will distribute certificate among the students of Sobhannbagh Madrassah.

The Prime Minister also handed over different awards to the members of Ansar-VDP for their contribution in various fields.

Home Minister Maj (retd) Rafiqul Islam and Director General of Ansar (Additional charge) Brig Mohammad Enayet Hossain were present at the podium during the parade.

Two succumb to injuries at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with serious injuries a couple of days ago died there yesterday.

Abdul Kalam, 30, son of Abdul Barek, who was brought to the hospital from near the town protection embankment at Lalbagh on February 22, died in the early hours of yesterday, hospital sources said.

One Sohel, who was seriously beaten up reportedly by a group of muggers at Joraila under Demra thana died at the DMCH yesterday morning, the sources said.

Girl burnt alive

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: A minor girl was roasted alive in a fire that also gutted two houses at Jaldi village under Banshkhali thana today, police said.

The fire originated from an oven at 11:30 am. The victim was identified as Nargis Akhter, 2.

Ershad

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League in the formation of the government would prove the political sagacity of the party in the long run, he added.

Anwar Hossain Manju said, "Those who have called Ershad an autocrat participated in the movement with the JP, which proves our success". "Although the present government is of consensus, it is essentially an Awami League government. The JP is playing a constructive role as an opposition party", he added.

The meeting was also addressed by among others, Nazirul Islam, MA Maleque, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Hasanuddin Sarker, Manirul Haq Chowdhury and Fazle Rabbi.

Lack of quorum

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sent then. There was none either from Jatiya Party or Jamaat.

After counting, the Deputy Speaker instructed the ringing of bell for five minutes to call members as per the Rules of Procedure. The chair also requested members present in the House not to leave for the sake of quorum.

Then the ruling party Chief Whip went for collecting members and returned with eight. But, in the meantime, two BNP MPs had quit.

After five minutes of bell ringing, the number of MPs was stood at 50 (AL-45 and BNP-5).

Finally, finding no other way, the Deputy Speaker postponed the discussion and adjourned the House at 9:43 pm.

Tripura

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sway over the refugees, living in squallid camps in Tripura.

The delegation is likely to meet refugee leaders including Upendra Lal Chakma, to convince them about the new government's commitment to peace in the CHT and rehabilitation of the refugees.

They are likely to be offered a new incentive package, raising the cash grant to Tk 15,000 per family and giving other benefits including Tk 11,000 for buying cattle and two bundles of corrugated iron sheets for re-settlement in their homes.

Earlier, the former BNP government had offered Tk 10,000 and similar grants for resettlement.

About 4,000 refugees returned home in two phases in 1994. But further repatriation was stalled following fresh demands for security and return of their lands. The demands were made by an association of refugees led by Upendra Lal Chakma.

Upendra Lal Chakma had earlier been the leader of a liaison committee that maintained the vital communication link between the government and the CPSS since negotiations for peace was renewed in the CHT in 1988.

According to the previous law, elections to seven union parishads were to be held by February 28 and to most of the union parishads by April.



Sitar maestro Pundit Ravi Shankar performing at the Osmani auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Some areas in city allocated for hawkers

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka City Corporation is considering various measures to rehabilitate the hawkers who have been recently evicted from different footpaths of the city, said a CMC press release last night.

The CMC said that as part of the rehabilitation programme, it would allow the hawkers to do business on different pavements and footpaths of the city during the holidays on temporary basis.

It allocated some areas for the hawkers to do business on the basis of nearness from the area they were evicted.

The hawkers who have been evicted from Gulistan, Bangabandhu Avenue, GPO, Baitul Mukarram, Sadarghat and Nawabpur area can do business at Muktagang and southern side of Osman Uddayan.

The area stretching from Notre Dame College to the bridge in the north of Bangladesh Bank and roads from Ideal School to T&T College have been allocated for hawkers of Motijheel and Khilgaon area, while the hawkers of Farmgate area will do business on footpath from Sonargaon crossing to Green Road.

The hawkers of New Market, Balaka Cinema Hall, Chandnichar, Gauchia and Chanchi.

The fire, which originated from a kitchen, gutted 35 houses at the village at 7 this morning. However, local people brought the fire under control.

The seriously wounded people were admitted to Potolia Health Complex.

IU admission tests begin

From Our Correspondent

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY (Kushtia), Feb 26: The written test for admission into the first year honours classes in Islamic University for the session 1996-97 began peacefully today.

The test for KU Unit was held on the first day. Some 1043 students appeared in the test.

The test for KU Unit will be held tomorrow while that of GA, GA, Uma and Cha units on March 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Necessary steps have been taken by the law enforcing agencies to maintain peaceful atmosphere on the campus.

Prince Charles arrives

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straight drove to the residence of the British High Commissioner where he will stay.

Prince Charles will meet President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Hasina is expected to be present at the workshop on 'Partners in Development.'

The workshop, to be participated by more than 150 senior political, business and community leaders, will work out a mechanism to develop relation between NGOs and business community.

Prince Charles will visit Sylhet for official opening of BT Earth Satellite Station there. He will also go to Chittagong for opening a new British Council office and to visit Cairn Energy Drilling Rig 'Orizon' at Sangu Gas Field.

He will open an exhibition tomorrow morning at the British Council Library in Dhaka on "Muslim in Britain," demonstrating close ties between the United Kingdom and the Muslim world.

The Prince will have a meeting with Prof Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank to discuss microcredit system.

Gas, fertiliser prices

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get was nearly achieved", he said.

The WB resident representative said the challenge before Bangladesh is to broaden the base of the economy and to diversify exports.

About the prevailing investment environment, he said Bangladesh has changed its image considerably. Well informed investors would feel confident that Bangladesh is on the right track and investment is profitable here.

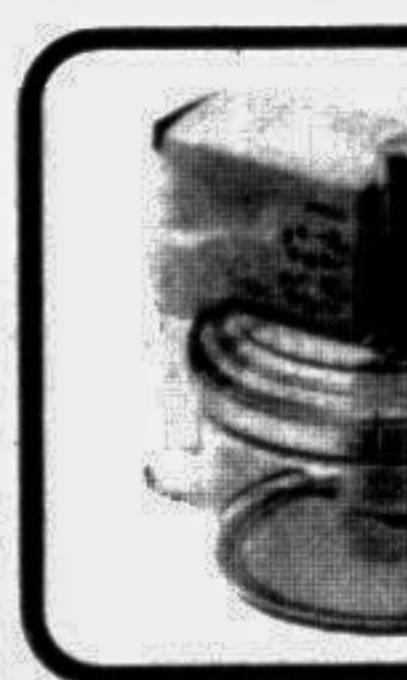
Pierre Landell-Mills said the two-day meeting was "extremely useful, frank, and open".

John Williamson also termed the meeting very constructive.

He said despite the changes going on in the country, there is still a great deal of poverty and added that he was shocked to see malnutrition of children.

Landell-Mills said the macro-economics situation is not alarming but it needs constant management. He said the situation last year was critical as many days were lost because of political unrest which also affected the economy.

"But we were surprised to see that the ambitious revenue tar-



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things better

PHILIPS

Employees of
C&F agents call
off strike

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: The Chittagong Clearing and Forwarding (C and F) Agents' Union called off its strike today following an understanding reached at a tripartite meeting.

They resumed their duties this afternoon.

All work relating to customs and delivery of goods came to a halt from yesterday after the employees of the C&F agents abstained from their duties to press home their demand for provident fund.

Bhorer Kagoj
report