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Prince Charles addressing a workshop on 'Partners in Development' organised by the PRIP Trust and The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum at Sheraton Hotel yesterday. — Star photo

Charles visits ActionAid projects at city slums

Asia Khatun, 30, was exuberant when Prince Charles was visiting her shop at Adalbar in Mohammadpur in the city yesterday morning, reports UNB. 'I'm fine,' Asia Khatun told the Prince of Wales, who enquired about her business she started three years back taking a loan of Tk 20,000 from ActionAid Projects. The Prince is the patron of the ActionAid Projects, an overseas British NGO, operating in 32 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Prince of Wales had a 90-minute walking and motor ride in Mohammadpur to see the condition of slum dwellers and projects, aiming at changing their lots. The ActionAid, since 1983, has been extending financial assistance to slum dwellers in the area for their income-generating jobs, including small trading, rickshaw pulling and sewing. Some 8,000 poor men and women are the present targets of the project. The Prince walked through half a kilometre muddy road to see sanitation and environmental condition of hundreds of slums, housing thousands of poor men and women, along both sides of the flood protection embankment. He went down the road and got in several slums to know about the progress of the community development activities, run by the British NGO. Prince Charles talked to several women working under the community development projects to know about the poverty alleviation and literacy programmes of the ActionAid. He talked to a woman operating a tubewell. Birza Banu took loan from the British NGO for sinking the tubewell. She earns money by supplying drinking water to the slum dwellers. The Prince, at a wayside canal, enjoyed the fishing. He exchanged greetings with a number of poor men and women. Sitting on the ground, the Prince watched the function of a day-care centre. Reflect, at Tikkapara, where 50 children are being looked after. The centre is also running a literacy programme for women.

PM hosts banquet

From Page 1 that while foreign trade and investment is a cornerstone of our foundation for a strong future, we must also focus on building our institutions and a strong civil society.' The Prime Minister said since she took office, sincere efforts of her government had been directed to consolidating democratic institutions in the country by adopting a consensus approach. Said Hasina: 'We are directing our efforts to boost the alleviation of poverty and to focus on the empowerment of women. The government is working in close cooperation with the private sector and the NGOs for economic emancipation of the people and realising 'Sonar Bangla', the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Welcoming the Prince of Wales, she said: 'It is a pleasure for me to welcome Your Royal Highness and the distinguished members of your entourage to Bangladesh when we are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of our independence, achieved in 1971 under the leadership of Father of our Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The people of Bangladesh shall always remember the political and moral support of the government and the people of the United Kingdom during the critical days of our War of Liberation in 1971, said Hasina. Hasina said the presence of a large Bangladeshi expatriate community is also an important dimension of our relationship, and their increasing contribution to the social and economic life of Britain is a matter of pride. She looks forward to attending the Commonwealth Summit in Edinburgh later this year, and hopes 'it would provide another opportunity for her to meet the Prince of Wales. 'We hope you will take back with you some pleasant memories of your visit and that you will visit us again in the not-too-distant future,' she told Charles. Former Chief Justice and head of caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman, ministers, MPs, diplomats, members of the royal entourage and elite of the city attended the banquet.

JCD president of IU unit held

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Feb 27: Saikupa thana police arrested president, Islamic University Unit of the Jatiyatnabadi Chhatra Dal last night. Police said, he was wanted in connection with several cases. JCD activists of the university staged demonstration on Jhenidah-Kushtia Highway today protesting the arrest of Niazul Bari. The girl was kidnapped from the cities Mohakhali area and sold to a madam of the Tan-bazar brothel in Narayanganj about two months ago. During a raid on the brothel, Gulshan police also arrested the madam identified as Rina Begum, police said.

Girl rescued from brothel

By Staff Correspondent Police rescued a young girl from a brothel in Narayanganj Wednesday night. The girl was kidnapped from the cities Mohakhali area and sold to a madam of the Tan-bazar brothel in Narayanganj about two months ago. During a raid on the brothel, Gulshan police also arrested the madam identified as Rina Begum, police said.

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3119 new posts for doctors soon PM urges BNP not to disturb political peace

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the opposition to maintain peace and not to create "a situation that will disturb the political stability and hamper foreign investment in the country," reports UNB. 'Have patience. People have achieved their voting rights through a long struggle. None can ignore the people... people will choose who will remain in power or not,' she said in an oblique reference to main opposition party BNP. The Prime Minister was speaking at the 14th national conference of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at the Dr Milon auditorium in Dhaka Medical College premises yesterday morning. 'People have got back their right to take their own decision. Have faith in people, people's power is the ultimate power,' Hasina said a day after BNP leader Khaleda Zia had threatened in Feni to launch a movement aiming to dislodge the government. Turning to doctors, the Prime Minister said that a national health policy would be announced in the shortest possible time and hoped that BMA would play a constructive role in this regard. A high-powered committee has been formed to formulate a health policy, she told the BMA members. She said the government had ensured recruitment of one thousand doctors besides regularising 1,400 doctors who were appointed on adhoc basis. Hasina said jobs of 5,535 doctors were made permanent while all officers in medical administration, who were on current charges, were regularised and others would be regularised soon. She further said that the process of creating 3,119 posts for doctors was in final stage and the Public Service Commission had invited applications for the vacant posts of teachers in the medical institutions. 'All our steps are aimed at providing modern medical services to the people,' she said and urged the doctors to put in their best efforts to serve the people. The Prime Minister regretted that the previous government had set up medical colleges without ensuring necessary facilities and said that the present government would set up 500-bed hospitals for all the medical colleges.

Tougher programme after Mar 30, warns BNP

By Staff Correspondent BNP Secretary General Abudus Samad Azad yesterday announced that his party would organise public rallies, demonstrations and processions across the country during the March 3-30 period to protest 'repression, misdeeds and misrule' of the government. On Wednesday, party chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia told a public meeting at Feni that BNP would stage demonstrations throughout the country on March 3 to mark the launching of its countrywide anti-government agitation programme. Begum Zia, however, did not elaborate. Addressing a press conference at the Leader of the Opposition's Minto Road official residence in the city, Mannan Bhuiyan said the BNP would hold public rallies and protest processions at the district headquarters on March 3, organise rallies and mass-contact programmes across the country during March 4-29 and arrange rallies and demonstrations at all the thana and district headquarters on March 30. 'On March 30, we'll announce our next course of action,' said the BNP Secretary General adding that the party would toughen the planned programmes if the government took up any steps jeopardising the country's independence, sovereignty and democracy during the period. 'The BNP leader said the agitation programmes had been announced to protest against repression and harassment of the opposition activists, scandal in the stock market, deterioration of law and order, price spiral of essentials and agricultural inputs, politicisation of the administration and state-owned electronic media, signing of the uneven water treaty with India, plans to form a sub-regional group, import of power from India, providing transit facility to India, and the alarming increase in smuggling. Asked on the nature of his party's next programme, Mannan Bhuiyan said, 'It will be a tough one... you know what does tough programme mean.' Replying to another question, he said that the government had so far made little progress in implementing the four-point accord with the Opposition on the running of the parliament. He told another questioner that two MPs of his party — Khairul Anam of Laxmipur and Md Shahjahan of Noakhali — and many others were injured in attacks by the ruling party activists in Feni on Wednesday. To another question, the BNP leader said that the countrymen were opposed to the idea of getting involved with the internal affairs of India by joining with that country to fight insurgency there. Earlier, Mannan Bhuiyan presented a two-page written statement on the government's 'misdeeds and failures' in running the country.

Prince Charles due in Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 27: Prince Charles is scheduled to visit the port city tomorrow, official sources said. He is expected to arrive at Chittagang Airport at 12 noon and from there he will fly to the gas exploration site in the Bay of Bengal. Later, the Prince will attend the inaugural function of the new British Council Library building. He is also to attend a reception to be hosted by the British High Commissioner at Kulshi. The Prince will leave for Dhaka in the afternoon.

Urs at Atrashi begins tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent A four-day holy Urs of Hazrat Khawja Enayetur-Rahman, a noted saint and spiritual master of the sub-continent, begins at the Bishwa Zaker Manjil at Atrashi, Faridpur tomorrow. The programme will include Qurankhawni, Milad, Zikr and offering of special prayers for peace and progress of Bangladesh and of the Muslim Ummah. Several lakhs of devotees from different parts of the sub-continent attend the Urs every year.

Another fake healer held

By Staff Correspondent Another self-proclaimed healer claiming to have spiritual power, Hakim Moinur Khan Panjahi, was arrested from his chamber Shap Mochon at North Jatrabari under Demra thana in the city yesterday. The Detective Branch (DB) of police took Monir Khan into custody on charges of deceiving people in the name of treatment, police said.

Dhaka, Delhi Transit accord

From Page 1 He said the Indian team assured Bangladesh of extending cooperation for the return of Chakma refugees. The two sides agreed that the Home Ministries of both the countries would hold periodic meetings regarding actions taken and feedback of various issues. According to an official statement released by India after the meeting, the two sides agreed to increase the number of survey teams for boundary demarcation and exchange of enclaves. It said issues relating to cross-border movements, Chakma problem, visa regime, trans-border crimes and review mechanism were also discussed. Later, Home Secretary Rezaul Hayat and Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi CM Shafi Sami paid a courtesy call on External Affairs Minister IK Gujral and Foreign Secretary Salman Haider.

Load shedding Hartal observed at Gopalpur

TANGAIL, Feb 27: A half-day hartal was observed today at Gopalpur thana headquarters in the district protesting frequent load shedding there, reports UNB. Vehicles were off the road and shops, schools, college and banks were closed during the hartal hours enforced by All Party Students' Unity. A procession was also brought out protesting the frequent disruption of power supply. Later police conducted raids in JCD dominated Zia, Bangabandhu, Jasmuddin and Surya Sen halls of the university. During the raids police rounded up one Aminul Islam alias Abdullah with a foreign made gun and a cartridge. An arms case has been filed with Ramna Thana in this connection, police said. Some materials for making cocktails were recovered from a room of Bangabandhu Hall and a barrel of a foreign made gun and a chapati from the roof of the Jasmuddin Hall of the university, police added.

Dialogue

From Page 1 on history and literature could be written. Commenting on organising art exhibitions, Pakistani painter and human rights activist, Nazish Ataulah said that these sorts of exhibitions were quite expensive to organise. 'I would suggest that we start inviting individual artists in residence. We should also make sure that if an artist in a South Asian country was in 'trouble', others must rise in defence of her.' Sara Zaker, a renowned Bangladeshi actress-director, pointed out that as regards drama communication in the South Asian region language posed a problem. Meanwhile, several participants presented their papers on the theme of the day 'Fundamentalism and Communalism'.

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Visitors at a stall at the US Trade Show that began at Sheraton Hotel yesterday. — Star photo

Many business houses in N' ganj were using walkie-talkies

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Feb 27: Police found no evidence of any harm done to the country by the two persons arrested for using VHF wireless last week. However, after two days of interrogation following the arrests, the police said, the arrested persons were probably using the wireless set for their business illegally. Police arrested the Managing Director of Mavrik Fashions Ltd and one of his employees from the New Jamir Super Market on Ali Ahmed Road in Narayanganj town on February 17. They were held for possessing a wireless set without any valid document. Meanwhile, according to source, about 30 garments houses in Narayanganj town were using such walkie-talkies with a fixed base set for better communication among them. Besides, some businessmen in the town claimed they were forced to introduce this modern communications technology as they could not rely on the telephone network in Narayanganj. They also said they did not have any idea about the frequency allotments and other formalities required for using such walkie-talkies. According to them, they had only bought the walkie-talkies from a supplier and started using the sets in accordance with the instructions given by the supplier. Police are now trying to find out the supplier. The Foreign Ministry in a letter to the police in the middle of January had said they noticed an illegal instruction into the frequency allotted for the walkie-talkies of the ministry.

Wife to die for killing husband in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Feb 27: A woman was sentenced to death for murdering her husband and a person was given life imprisonment for his involvement in the killing. The first Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Momin-ullah announced the judgment here today. According to the prosecution, Shamsul Huq Mridha of Dariabad village in Banaripara thana married Mamataz some 10 years ago. In 1994, Mamataz developed illicit relations with Bazur Rahman, a relative of Shamsul Haq. On June 24, 1995, both of them were caught by Shamsul Haq in an odd position and for that Shamsul beat up Bazur mercilessly and abused Mamataz. The next day Mamataz prepared some cakes mixed with insecticides and served it to Shamsul Haq. Eating the cakes, Shamsul became seriously ill and died on way to Banaripara hospital.

Sylhet

From Page 1 given civic reception by the Sylhet Pourshava at the Lucka-toorah Golf Club. 'I was eager to visit Bangladesh', he said while speaking at the reception. The large Bangladeshi community in Britain had been contributing significantly to the economic development of the United Kingdom. 'We are very much proud of these people', Charles said. Britain, he said, is happy to set up the tele-satellite station in Sylhet as this will benefit the people in Sylhet in communicating with the Bangladeshi community in the UK. Charles said 'a large number of Bangladeshi youths are also involved with the Youth Business Trust, which I had been running for 20 years.' Through this programme, promising youths are being involved with new enterprises, he said. The Prince ended his speech saying 'Joy Bangladesh, Joy Sylhet.' The Sylhet pourshava chairman handed over a gold-made key of the Sylhet pourshava to the Prince of Wales.

Minister regrets attacks

From Page 1 also conducted to identify those who had attacked JF rallies during the BNP rule. The 50-minute unscheduled debate began when Mosharraf Hossain of BNP stood on a point of order to complain against the ruling party saying that its activists had deliberately attacked the BNP supporters at Dagonbhuiyan to foil the 'biggest ever rally taking place in Feni.' Then Khairul Anam of the BNP took the floor to say that on his way to the Feni rally he had been stabbed by the AL activists at Dagonbhuiyan. Khairul Anam showed the stab injury in his arm and claimed that hundreds of BNP activists and supporters had been exposed to the AL sponsored terrorism. At one stage Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was presiding over the session, switched off his microphone and gave him the floor again in the face of strong insistence of the BNP legislators. The BNP lawmaker alleged that the police, standing nearby, did not respond to his loud appeal to rescue him. 'The incident reminded me of the fact that 30,000 opposition activists were killed during the first three-and-half year rule of Awami League,' the BNP legislator told the House. After Khairul Anam, ASM Feroze of Awami League took the floor to claim that the reported attack on the BNP activists was rather a result of the internecine conflict of the Feni unit of the party. The ruling party MP also said that an AL legislator, Dipankar Talukder, had been attacked by the BNP men in the past even in presence of a BNP minister. Then, Akhtaruzzaman of the AL asked 'how did Khairul Anam who reportedly received stab injury could have been able to speak so loudly in the House?' Akhtaruzzaman also claimed that the BNP was trying to disturb the favourable investment climate which was created after the taking over of power by AL. Speaking next, Jinal Abedin Farook of the BNP told the House that 177 BNP supporters had been dragged off a bus by the AL activists with a contingent of police standing idle nearby. Claiming that it was a pre-planned attack, the BNP lawmaker referred to 'an Awami League MP who had raised the issue of the BNP rally several times in the House over the last four days.' Sharif Khasruzzaman of AL said in the face of government drive to curb terrorism, even a large number of ruling party activists were now serving jail terms. Both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia were present in the House during the debate, but none of them spoke on the occasion.

250 shanties gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent More than 250 shanties were gutted in a fire at a slum at Faridabad under Sutrapur thana in the city last night. The cause of the blaze that started from a house of the slum near the IG Gate Bank Colony at about 8:30 pm could not be known immediately. Fire service personnel took about two hours to extinguish the blaze. Extra police were deployed following the incident, police said.

Charles calls on

From Page 1 the President for receiving him. He expressed his eagerness to know about Bangladesh and her people and the activities of the British non-government voluntary organisations working in the country. The Prince also expressed his satisfaction over signing of a treaty on the Ganges water sharing with India. The Prime Minister and the Prince of Wales expressed satisfaction at the existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and Britain and hoped that it would be further strengthened in the days ahead. Officials said the Prince when he called on her at her office showed interest about the economic activities in Bangladesh, particularly in the rural areas. The Prime Minister spoke of various activities undertaken by her government on poverty alleviation, promotion of education and population control. She stressed that education was necessary particularly for rural women for generation of employment for them. Education would help contain population explosion, she added. Sheikh Hasina said the government has requested the UNFPA to train and motivate people in this regard. Prince Charles was happy to note that the Prime Minister had fixed time to answer the questions of parliament members herself in the House. Sheikh Hasina and Prince Charles lauded the role of Bengali community in Britain. During the meeting, both of them underscored the need for peace in the Sub-continent.