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The World on Time



Kerb market traders staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the Dhaka Stock Exchange building yesterday to press their demands. — Star photo

## Kibria tells Jatiya Sangsad BNP govt gave huge bank loans on political ground

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday charged the past BNP government with indulging in corruption and politicisation while extending bank loans which resulted in disaster in the economy, reports UNB.

Taking part in general discussion on the president's speech, he said huge amounts of loans were handed out within three-four days of submitting application to the banks just on political ground during the BNP rule.

But there is no trace of these huge amounts of loans, he said and pointed out that growth of credit to private sector grew by 23.59 per cent in 1994-95 and 22.59 per cent in 1995-96 fiscal years and this was because of political purpose.

"Credits were directed to the borrowers considering their political affiliation rather than their qualification," he said, adding that huge money fuelled inflation on one hand and led to erosion of foreign exchange reserve on the other.

In his deliberation, the minister mainly tried to reply to the points raised by former Finance Minister Saifur Rahman a couple of days back and made counteroffensive by saying that BNP had totally failed in managing the economy.

"We had to take many hasty decisions to remove the anarchy, indiscipline and burden of losses created by the BNP government. We are bearing the legacy of BNP's economic mismanagement," he told the House.

Kibria said Saifur Rahman mentioned the steps during his 11 years as the finance minister, but stopped short of mentioning the corruption, irregularities and indiscipline in the field of economy.

He pointed out the performance of the banking sector as an example and said 30 per cent of the credit given by the nationalised commercial banks and 40 per cent by the private banks had become non-per-

## Bangabandhu murder

From Page 1  
The special public prosecutor in which he had mentioned that his client did not want any one to suffer the way her father had suffered. Thakur gave a picture of his jail life and said, "if this is not suffering, what else is suffering."

Almost all the accused complained of identical problems of miserable living condition and poor diet.

The court observed that until the guilt was proved, the accused were not guilty in the eyes of the law and that they would be provided with the maximum benefits as per the law.

The judge also advised the prosecution side to take necessary steps for improving the deplorable conditions inside the prison and observed that the accused would have to be kept alive to receive the judgement and also in mental and physical condition to face the trial.

The chargesheet in connection with the Bangabandhu murder case was submitted to the CMM's court on January 15 last, by the CID. A total of 24 persons were accused in the case of which 14 are absconding, six were facing the trial while four others were not sent up for trial as they were dead.

The six accused facing the trial are former military officials: Syed Farooqur Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Abdul Wa-

## Medical board for Sonia

A seven-member medical board was formed for acid burnt Sonia at the directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

The board will be led by Prof Mostafizur Rahman, Director of the Islamic Eye Hospital, to supervise the treatment of young girl Sonia, who is now under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Other members of the board are: Prof Syed Mudasser Ali, Director of the National Ophthalmology Institute, Prof Saleh Uddin of PG Hospital, eminent plastic surgeon Prof Mohammad Shahidullah, Dr Mohammad Sharfuddin Ahmed of the BIRDEM, Dr Mohammad A Z M Salek of the DMCH and Dr M L Sen of the Plastic Surgery Department of the DMCH.

The newly-constituted medical board yesterday examined Sonia at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

**BCL-JCD clash leaves 24 hurt at Sirajganj**

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 12: Police arrested five people after the student wings of ruling Awami League and opposition BNP clashed in the town today that left 24 people wounded, five seriously, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Bhola, Majnu and Azizul of Chhatra League and Liton and Ekram of JCD.

The five seriously wounded were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital.

Police and witnesses said the clash began at 10:30 in the morning when about a hundred activists of JCD attempted to regain control of the Sirajganj University College, now under the grip of Chhatra League.

The clash lasted for an hour. Both groups used guns, sticks and crackers.

Police charged batons on the feuding groups and lobbed tear-gas shells to bring the situation under control.

**Khaleda**  
From Page 1

rested and kept detained till the war ends, Bhuiyan added.

"In that situation it was not unusual of being arrested. Present Prime Minister was also under arrest in a Dhanmondi residence during the war," the BNP Secretary General said.

**Mannan**  
From Page 1

the precondition for stabilising democracy. But the people could not cast their votes in all the by-elections held under this government, he alleged.

Accusing the government of massive politicisation, the BNP legislator said it had politicised every institution of the country. Officials and employees cannot work freely for the influence and politicisation of the administration.

Political stability is a must for development, he said, but blamed the government for destroying the economy. Bhuiyan said export has not increased, import has not increased, revenue earnings have fallen and the banking sector collapsed because of misuse and mismanagement of this government.

More mills and factories were being closed down, electric supply disrupted frequently and Indian goods flooded the local market due to rampant smuggling, he alleged.

Castigating the government for resorting to arrest and repression on the opposition, the BNP secretary general said the government should not do anything which might destabilise the situation.

All urgent decisions should be taken through discussion with the opposition, he said warning that if any decision goes against the interest of the nation then BNP will have no alternative but to come out on the street.

## 'Reserve service' policy for retd soldiers soon: PM

CHITTAGONG, Mar 12: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said a "reserve service" policy for the retired soldiers would be formulated soon to activate them in nation-building activities, reports UNB.

"Although you are retired, but that does not bring end to your responsibility. You will have to make use of your learning and experiences of your soldier life," she said at an army reunion function.

"You still have a role to play in the development activities in greater national interest", Hasina said addressing a 'Darbar' arranged on the occasion of 6th reunion of the East Bengal Regiment Centre (EBRC) at Chittagong Cantonment this morning.

"Reserve service" policy for the retired soldiers, the Prime Minister observed, would enable them to play an effective role in the national activities and get necessary directives from the army.

The Prime Minister recalled with gratitude Bir Shrestha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal and Mohammad Hamidur Rahman, soldiers of this regiment, and three hundred other soldiers who were brutally killed in this centre on the fateful night of March 25, 1971.

She also recalled with deep respect the memory of the founder of this regiment, late Major Gani and Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation War Late General Ataul Gani Osmani.

The Darbar was attended, among others, by Home Minister Major (ret) Rafiqul Islam, Mayor of Chittagong ABM Mohtuddin Chowdhury, Major General (Retd) Shafiqul MP, Major General (ret) Abdus Salam MP, Col (ret) Showkat Ali MP, Col (ret) Farooque Khan MP and other high civil and military officials.

Members of the shaheed families and veteran tigers' families including Begum Ghani, wife of Late Major MA Ghani, Begum Wahida Wasludin, wife of Lt Gen Khwaza Wasludin, were also present.

Earlier, on her arrival, the Prime Minister was received by new colonel of the regiment Chief of Army Staff Lt General Mahabubur Rahman and the local area commander, Major General Muhammad Abdul Matin.

Later, she placed wreath at Ajana Shaheed Samadhi (the unknown martyrs graveyard).

Hasina resented that a vested quarter had been dishing out canards in planned way in last 21 years relating to Awami League and the Armed Forces.

They (vested quarter) tried to mislead and create confusion by saying that Rakkhi Bahini was raised as rival of the army."

But Rakkhi Bahini was a para-military force, as exists in different countries, and formation of that force was determined by the necessity of that time, she said, adding Rakkhi Bahini was formed with the freedom fighters.

The OC of Demra thana, Shahabuddin Ahmed, was closed Tuesday and was taken to Razabagh police line on charge of missing power, according to police.

Meanwhile, a group of people put up a barricade on the road between Syadabad and Jatra-bari at about 11 am yesterday, creating a heavy traffic jam on the busy road for about an hour. Later, some senior police officials rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

**Grameen cellular phone service by March 26**

An interconnection arrangement agreement was signed in Dhaka yesterday between Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) and Grameen Phone to facilitate the latter to go into operation for cellular telephone service in the country by March 26, an official handout said, reports BSS.

BTB chairman M H Chowdhury and Director Coordination of Grameen Phone A R Sabar signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Minister for Post and Telecommunications Mohammad Nasim, Managing Director of Grameen Bank Prof Dr Mohammad Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Phone, Inge Skaar and senior officials of the ministry, BTB and Grameen Phone were present.

The government signed an agreement with three private organisations for providing cellular telephone service in the country on November 11 last year. The organisations are Grameen phone, T M International and Sheba Telecom (Pvt) Ltd.

**Samad Azad calls on Sharma, Gowda**

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad called on Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda at the latter's office here today, reports BSS.

During the meeting the Foreign Minister conveyed to Deve Gowda the greetings of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Later, Abdus Samad Azad called on the Indian President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

**Business Advisory body meets**

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury yesterday chaired a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee at the Jatiya Sangsad in the city, reports BSS.

The meeting fixed schedules for unfinished business of the current session. It also discussed important national issues which may be raised at the coming session.

The meeting was attended by Business Advisory Committee member Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Chief Whip Abdul Hasnat Abdul-lah, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Chief Whip of the opposition Khondoker Delwar Hossain, Jatiya Party chief Hussain Muhammad Ershad MP, Mohammad Saifur Rahman MP, Advocate Mohammad Rahmat Ali MP, Parliamentarian Advisor to the Prime Minister Suranjit Sengupta, Whip Prof Rafiqul Islam and M K Anwar MP.

**PM's stand on SPA a breach of promise: WP**

By Staff Correspondent  
The Bangladesh Workers Party has criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her government's decision not to repeal the Special Powers Act.

The standing committee of the Workers Party Politburo at a meeting in the city yesterday said the Awami League government's decision not to repeal the Special Powers Act is "a breach of promise given to the people."

The meeting held with Rashed Khan Menon in the chair, reminded Sheikh Hasina and her party that they while in the opposition had repeatedly promised to repeal the Act introduced by the AL government in 1974.

**Independent HRC**  
From Page 1

Explaining the limitations of the laws relating to government sponsored HRCs in India and Sri Lanka, the organisations said that the Commission must enjoy the legal right to conduct investigations into any reported incident of human rights violation, and that it has to have an inherent power and mechanism to punish those found responsible for any human rights violation, without any interference of the government.

For the sake of neutral functioning of the Commission, they said that the HRC must have absolute authority to appoint its own staff.

The organisations also demanded that the government should open a dialogue with cross-sections of people, specially the legal and human rights experts.

**Benazir to urge PPP to choose new leader**

ISLAMABAD, Mar 12: Former premier Benazir Bhutto has said she would urge her Pakistan People's Party to choose a new leader despite being named by the party as life-long president, it was reported today, says AFP.

She told reporters she had played her role in politics and she was not aspiring to return to power or work as opposition leader. The Dawn newspaper reported.

Benazir made the statement in Lahore a day after a high-level PPP meeting in Islamabad endorsed her as the party's president for life.



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## Demra thana OC closed

By Staff Correspondent

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## CHT talks resume

From Page 1

But he bolted inside the highwalled villa when asked whether his 'bosses' declined to talk because of disagreement.

Earlier, Mayor of Chittagong Mohiuddin Chowdhury who had flashed optimism about the talks in January, arrived at Meghna. But he had nothing to tell the newsmen as he had just arrived.

The talks were described to have a nice beginning. But it entered rough waters on the tricky issues of the expulsion of settlers and land rights, sources said.

No immediate breakthrough was expected as the PCJSS stuck to its demand for expulsion of the settlers. But talks are likely to continue today. It might even roll into the next day, the sources said.

The PCJSS delegation includes its top leaders, Sudhasindhu Khisa, Raktoutpal Chakma and Gautam Chakma. Sudhasindhu Khisa did not attend the last round of talks.

**3 killed, 14 hurt in road accident**

JOYPOURHAT, Mar 12: Three people were killed and 14 others injured when a minibus ran off the road and fell into a ditch near Kalai thana headquarters on Bogra-Joypurhat road today, reports UNB.

Police said two passengers — Farook, 12, of Dewanganj thana of Jamalpur and Tarajul, 45, of Sonatola thana of Bogra — died on the spot when the Bogra-bound minibus from Panchbibi rolled into the ditch at about 2:30 pm.

Another unidentified passenger died at Sadar Hospital soon after admission. The bodies were sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Three of the injured were admitted to Kalai thana Health Complex while another was rushed to the sadar hospital.

Police seized the bus, but the driver and his helper fled the scene. A case was filed.

Another report from Jessore says, an old man was crushed under the wheels of a truck on Jessore-Banapole road at Ben-e-Ali in Jhekgacha thana today.

The victim was identified as Wajed Ali, 50, a farmer of Bodkhana village in Jhekgacha. He met the accident while crossing the road.

The body was kept at Jessore Hospital morgue. A case was filed with Jhekgacha thana.

**Ershad: BNP jeopardised**

From Page 1  
Oli Ahmed's recent statement in parliament that he (Oli) had talks with Gen (Retd) Latif on the golf course and his plea that Ershad should disclose names of those who had taken money from him, Ershad said he would disclose it in due course on Gen Latif's release from jail.

"I must disclose it to the people with all evidences and witnesses who were involved in that political horse-trading," he told the House.

Referring to the events that led to his fall, General Ershad said he had stepped down voluntarily as all political parties demanded a free and fair election.

"If I wished, being a soldier, I could have started a war (with them) whatever be the outcome, but I did not do it," he said. As he narrated his story, some BNP members jeered at him.

Responding to various canards against his after his fall, Ershad said it was an irony of fate that those who once spread scanda against him were now facing the same fate. Newspapers were coming out everyday with various stories about them, he added.

Referring to the word "autocracy" labelled against his regime, the JP chairman welcomed it as a decoration, recognising his work for the people.

About the Special Powers Act, Ershad said he had scrapped the law before his resignation. "It is inconceivable for me how a political party supports the law while in power and has it after losing power."

About various reforms during his time, the former President said some vested groups did not like his reform programmes which failed to protect their interests.

Coming back to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed's January 15 speech, he said that in parliamentary democracy, the president is not the head of government, he is the symbol of national unity and prestige.

He suggested that instead of the President, the Prime Minister as the head of government should deliver speech in parliament highlighting the government's policy, programme and vision so that MPs could make criticism on it.

Because, if the President is undermined, the entire nation is undermined. We cannot be little the President who is the symbol unity and prestige."

**Hanif: I will succeed**

From Page 1  
At one stage, Mayor Hanif gave the newsmen a list of work done and undertaken by the DCC during the last three years.

The Mayor appealed to all city dwellers to dispose of their garbage between 10 pm and 5 am. "I appeal to you (journalists) to help me create awareness among the citizens," he added.

When asked whether he would consider resigning as demanded by Abul Hasanat, a former Mayor, Hanif replied that he was well aware of the "political character" of the former mayor.

"I am the first elected Mayor of the city and if the City Corporation deal with one issue like mosquito eradication, I would definitely consider resigning," Hanif replied.

The press conference was then witnessed commotion and disorder as a section of the newsmen stood up to leave the room.

The Mayor thanked the newsmen for attending the press conference and requested them to join him in a lunch.

A good number of the 108 ward commissioners of the city were present on the occasion.

**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**  
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