

'Pakistan has reservation about sub-regional grouping'

"Islamabad has reservation about the planned sub-regional cooperation under the aegis of SAARC," a Pakistan High Commission source said in Dhaka yesterday.

Referring to the statement of Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad that Pakistan endorsed the proposed sub-regional grouping, the source told UNB that Pakistan had already expressed its reservation about the issue.

Dhaka forwarded the proposal of sub-regional cooperation at the latest meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers in New Delhi last December.

The planned sub-regional cooperation groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the Indian states having geographical contiguity with Bangladesh.

The current official stand of Dhaka on the issue is that Article Seven of the SAARC charter permits such a sub-regional grouping.

Iranian plane crashes with 80 aboard

TEHRAN, Mar 14: An Iranian military C-130 transport plane has crashed in northeastern Iran with 80 people on board, the official IRNA news agency said today, reports AFP.

The plane crashed at about 6 pm (1430 GMT) Thursday for unknown reasons 38 kilometers (24 miles) from Mashhad, in the mountainous region of northeastern Iran along the border with Afghanistan, the agency added.

There was no immediate word on the fate of the 80 passengers on board.

The propeller-driven plane left the town of Dezful in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan at 4:30 pm (1300) Thursday for Mashhad and ~~overshot~~ short of the arrival, the agency added.

Tripura militants for talks, if held in third country

NEW DELHI, Mar 14: A tribal separatist group in the Indian state of Tripura said today it was ready for peace talks with New Delhi, the United News of India reported, says AFP.

The All Tripura Tiger Force said it would start negotiations if they were held in a third country, but added it would not give up its weapons, the agency said.

The group, in a statement issued in Tripura also demanded the withdrawal of Indian troops from the state.

Hundreds of people have died in Tripura in a prolonged separatist insurgency led by tribal militants. The rebel groups have stepped up attacks on non-tribals in recent months, killing large numbers of people.

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The Daily Star

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Body to probe leakage of question paper SSC English 2nd paper exam postponed

By Staff Correspondent

The English second paper examinations of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), scheduled to be held today, was postponed yesterday, according to a government handout.

Other examinations, however, will be held on schedule, the Controller and acting Chairman of Dhaka Board told The Daily Star last night.

A fresh date for the English second paper examinations will be announced within a couple of days. The date is likely to be after all the examinations on schedule, he said.

This is for the first time this year that the SSC examinations under all the five education boards in the country are being held under an identical set of questions.

Earlier, on Thursday night, the authorities announced postponement of the objective

examination of English second paper.

Sources in the Dhaka Education Board said the decision to postpone the English second paper examinations was made amidst allegations of leakage of question paper.

The Controller said that a general diary was made with the Lalbagh police station in connection with the alleged leakage of the question paper.

Allegations of leakage of question paper was received from different parts of the country, Lalbagh police said quoting the GD. Police, however, also said that no name was mentioned in the GD.

A three-member committee was formed on Thursday to probe the allegations. The committee has been given seven days' time to submit its report in this regard.

The committee is headed by Md Abdul Khair Khan Chowdhury, chief evaluation officer of Dhaka Board. Two other members are Nazrul Islam, Deputy Controller, Secondary Education Board and Md Faizuddin, Assistant Controller of the Board.

Meanwhile, another handout said last night that an inquiry committee was formed by the Comilla Education Board to investigate into the allegations of mass copying during the English first paper examinations at the Choudhogram centre.

The authorities were also considering whether the Choudhogram centre will be retained.

All centres where allegations of mass copying will be proved will be cancelled, the handout added.

Ban on student politics at RU goes

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 14: The ban on student politics at Rajshahi University was withdrawn today after talks between the student leaders and the university authorities.

The University Syndicate at an emergency meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdul Khaled in the chair took the decision to withdraw the ban. The ban was imposed on March 4 by the Syndicate.

Meanwhile, Honours and Masters examinations of different departments were held today on schedule.

Nor'wester lashes city

By Staff Correspondent

A nor'wester accompanied by light rain lashed the city last night.

The storm continued for about 10 minutes. Met office sources said that the wind was blowing 30 to 36 km per hour.

The highest wind speed of 48 km per hour continued for only one minute.

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59 rivers, tributaries and canals will be re-excavated

Government has taken up three projects to re-excavate 59 rivers, tributaries and canals across the country in three years (1996-97 to 1999-2000) to complete.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has formally inaugurated the re-excavation programme of Gorai river in Kushtia last month.

The main objectives of the projects are to ensure water for irrigation purpose as well as flushing out water during the rainy season by re-excavating the silted beds of rivers, tributaries and canals.

According to the Project Concept Paper (PCP), siltation of rivers, tributaries and canals were causing flooding and waterlogging in the rainy season and crisis of water for irrigation during the dry season.

Rivers, tributaries and canals to be re-excavated under the three projects are in the districts of Kushtia, Narsingdi, Gopalganj, Sharaitpur, Madaripur, Tangail, Faridpur, Rajbari, Sherpur, Noakhali.

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UN call to refrain from hostilities Tanks roll out on streets of Tirana

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 14: The UN Security Council yesterday called for an end to the violence in Albania as tanks appeared for the first time on the streets of the Albanian capital Tirana, report agencies.

An OSCE delegation led by former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky left the Austrian capital today aboard an Italian military plane a bid to meet with embattled Albanian President Sali Berisha.

In a formal statement adopted here by consensus among the 15 members, the Security Council urged all concerned to refrain from hostilities and acts of violence and to cooperate with diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The Council Statement was issued after an AFP correspondent in Tirana reported that tanks were deployed in Tirana outside President Sali Berisha's offices and government ministries after a day marked by continuing chaos and the sounds of automatic gunfire rattling through the city.

Albanian military personnel yesterday fled by sea and air to Italy, and Italy evacuated 400 foreigners from the chaos of a civil war.

The Security Council stressed the importance of regional stability, and "fully supports the diplomatic efforts of the

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None arrested yet for killing Situation tense in JCD dominated DU halls

By DU Correspondent

A tense situation was prevailing in the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-dominated halls of Dhaka University yesterday following the killing of a student, Arif Hossain Taj, in Bangabandhu Hall, Thursday morning.

Arif, an activist of the BNP JCD, was gunned down allegedly by a group belonging to a rival faction of JCD.

None was arrested till yesterday in connection with the killing. Many residents of the dormitories alleged that rival factions of JCD had stored arms in their respective halls.

Till yesterday, activist of

Doctor murder: Another arrested from Rajbari

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested another accused in the killing of a PG Hospital doctor, Hafizur Rahman, early this month.

Dhamondi police arrested Muktar, 28, from Balaiandhi Thana in Rajbari in the early hours of yesterday. Police said Muktar was suspected to be one of the main accused in the murder.

Earlier, police arrested 14 people of whom two confessed

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Belgian held with antique statue

By Staff Correspondent

A Belgian Luc Chris, who was arrested at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Thursday night with an antique stone statue, was produced before the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Police prayed for remand to interrogate the arrested person.

Chris is a consultant to the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority.

A source at the ZIA said that the security personnel of the airport found the statue after scanning his luggage at the departure lounge.

Albanian military personnel yesterday fled by sea and air to Italy, and Italy evacuated 400 foreigners from the chaos of a civil war.

The Security Council stressed the importance of regional stability, and "fully supports the diplomatic efforts of the

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ICC Trophy: Team off to Malaysia

Sports Reporter

A 20-member Bangladesh national cricket team, headed by Akram Khan, left the capital last night for Kuala Lumpur to participate in the sixth ICC Trophy scheduled to start in the capital city of Malaysia from March 24.

Bangladesh, who have been placed in Group B for the first round along with West Africa, Argentina, Denmark, UAE and the hosts, will take on Argentina in their opening match on March 24.

Sources in the JCD said that Titu group was now preparing to regain control of Bangabandhu Hall.

A number of resident students of the JCD-controlled

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Dhaka full member of UN spl body on peacekeeping operations

Bangladesh has been made a full member of the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, reports UNB.

The decision was conveyed on Thursday by the committee's chairman ambassador Ibraian A Gambart, permanent representative of Nigeria to the UN, in accordance with the resolution of the 51st session of the UN General Assembly in a letter to the Bangladesh permanent representative Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury.

The special committee on peacekeeping operations was established in 1965 with 34 members, including India and Pakistan from South Asia. It undertakes a comprehensive

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Israeli cabinet okays housing project in E Jerusalem

India should "stop repression" in Indian-held Kashmir as "only then there could be meaningful negotiations."

He said Kashmiri leaders from both Indian and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir would attend the forthcoming summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference due to be held in Islamabad from March 23.

India holds the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state, while Pakistan administers the northern third.

A peaceful settlement is necessary for economic development of both countries and the Indian leaders should realise that there is no other option for

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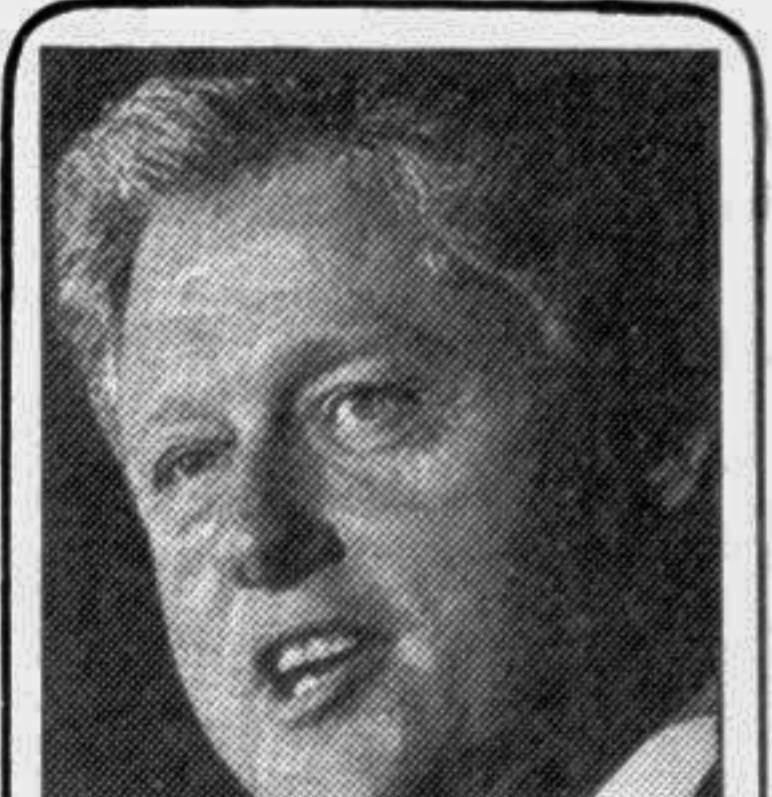
soldier opened fire on Israeli school girls on the Israeli-Jordanian border, killing seven. Israeli officials blamed the incident in part on the growing tension in the region.

Israel radio said groundbreaking work was to begin Monday. However, Netanyahu's adviser, David Bar-Ilan, said the prime minister, while committing himself to starting the project next week, did not cite a specific day.

The Cabinet was told by the head of military intelligence, Gen. Moshe Yahalon, that a wave of Palestinian violence would erupt the minute the construction work begins. Israel TV's Channel 2 said.

Yahalon told the ministers that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat recently met with lead-

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Clinton hurt, to undergo thigh surgery

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: President Bill Clinton will be alert under a local anaesthetic during planned surgery later today to repair a torn tendon in his upper right thigh after an early-morning slip, the White House said, reports Reuter.

"He won't go under a general anaesthetic," Mary Ellen Glynn, a White House spokeswoman, said from West Palm Beach, Florida, where the President hurt himself.

Glynn, speaking on the ABC programme "Good Morning America," said Clinton probably would need crutches to get around for a few weeks after

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Weizman breaks left arm and thigh in fall

JERUSALEM, Mar 14: Israeli President Ezer Weizman tripped today as he stepped out of a helicopter, breaking his left wrist and thigh, reports AP.

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