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Govt has no plan
to postpone
SSC exams,
says Minister

By Staff Correspondent

The government has no intention of postponing the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations, said Minister for Education A S H K Sadek.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone yesterday afternoon, Sadek said that his ministry had also instructed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure strict vigilance during the whole period of examinations.

Earlier, the English second paper examination, which was scheduled to be held yesterday was postponed amidst allegations of leakage of question papers.

The minister said "what has been found so far is a handwritten version, giving indication of one set of question of English second paper. The photocopy or the ditta copy of the printed form of the question

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**SAARC summit
in Male
from May 12**

COLOMBO, Mar 15: The ninth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will begin on May 12 in Male, capital of the Maldives, according to Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry sources today, reports Xinhua.

The sources said attending the three-day summit will be heads of state of the seven member countries — India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, The Maldives and Sri Lanka.

On the summit agenda will be a South Asian free trade area, South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement, the elimination of regional plagues such as drug trafficking, cross-border terrorism, child abuse and smuggling, the sources said.

**ALCWC meets
Mar 21**

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held on March 21 in the city.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will chair the meeting to be held at 2 pm at Ganobhaban, the official residence of the Prime Minister, said a party press release.

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Tea export up in 7
months

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25-point fall
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DSE MARKET

DSE price index	1498.53(+1.64%)
Market capital Tk	11623.90cr
Transactions in volume	24262
Transactions in value Tk	9.06cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index	674.05 (+1.59%)
Market capital Tk	9199.63cr
Transactions in volume	74845
Transactions in value Tk	15986770

Supplement

One page supplement
on Bangladesh Rifles
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Foreign Secy's of 4 countries to meet in Kathmandu
**Concept of sub-regional grouping
likely to be finalised on Apr 2**

By M Anwarul Haq

The concept of sub-regional cooperation among four South Asian countries is likely to be finalised through an agreed minutes on April 2 following a 3-day meeting of foreign secretaries of the countries in Kathmandu.

Dhaka and Kathmandu will jointly spell out the framework of the proposed sub-regional cooperation among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan at the 3-day meeting of the Foreign Secretaries beginning in the Nepalese capital on March 31, according to diplomatic sources.

Bangladesh would be presenting a "concept paper" while Nepal would be offering an "approach paper" at the meeting, the sources indicated.

A meeting of the foreign

ministers of the four countries is due to be held shortly which will put the final seal of approval to the new regional grouping.

Foreign Minister of Nepal Rabindranath Sharma would formally inaugurate the sub-regional conference of Foreign Secretaries while Foreign Secretary Kumar Gyawali would preside over the three-day meeting.

Both have been newly appointed by the new Nepalese government of Lokendra Bahadur Chand.

Dhaka, Delhi and Kathmandu, in the last three months, held a series of informal consultations at the highest political level on the concept of sub-regional cooperation. The governments of the four countries have now almost fin-

ished the "finer points for setting the objectives of sub-regional cooperation among them," according to sources.

The date for the meeting of the foreign secretaries, fixed earlier, became uncertain following the recent change of government in Nepal. However, the new Prime Minister of Nepal acted swiftly by endorsing the idea and decided to go ahead with the meeting on schedule.

The Nepalese ambassador in Dhaka talking to The Daily Star yesterday confirmed that his government would host the three-day meet and said a formal letter of invitation has been handed over to Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan from his new Nepalese counterpart Kumar Gyawali.

The "concept paper" being prepared by Dhaka and the "approach paper" to be presented by Kathmandu will spell out the detailed objectives of the sub-regional cooperation, including the likely areas of cooperation among the four geographically contiguous countries of South Asia.

The sub-regional moot of Foreign Secretaries will highlight the areas for exploring the possibilities of taking steps under a common platform to address some identical problems confronting these four countries. The sectors that will receive attention are mainly about expanding economic links, increasing trade and sub-regional investment.

Other issues to be highlighted include trafficking of

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**Voter-registration
system to be
simplified**

The Election Commission has taken steps towards simplification of the existing voter-registration system, reports UNB.

An EC press release yesterday said new forms, amending the voter list rule 1982, were introduced for enrollment of the voters for the 1996 elections. The voter registration under this arrangement began in 1995.

According to certain circles, filling up these forms is a complicated and time-consuming procedure. In view of this situation, the Election Commission is examining matters of simplification of the voter registration.

The Election Commission has meanwhile, invited suggestion from different political parties and observer groups in

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**JCD infighting: Procession
on DU campus fired upon**

By DU Correspondent

At least 18 students of Dhaka University were injured, three with bullet, when some armed youths opened fire on a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) procession near the Jashimuddin Hall on the campus yesterday afternoon.

The bullet-hit students were Khalru Islam Makhon, a final year student of Management, S M Khabir, a second year student of Accounting and A K M Rashedul Islam, a first year student of Mass Communication and Journalism.

Khalru Islam Makhon was bullet-hit in the testicles and the two others were hit in the right thigh. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The condition of Makhon was critical, hospital sources said.

A JCD leader, Arif Hossain Taj was killed in a shoot out between the two rival groups in

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The 15 others were injured

when the processionists ran into a shelter in the melee following the indiscriminate firing from the roof top of the auditorium of the nearby Surya Sen Hall, allegedly by activists of the rival Tito group in the JCD, witnesses said. Ten to fifteen shots were heard. Ten to fifteen shots were heard.

The shooting was a sequel to a factional feud in the JCD: the student wing of BNP.

Some witnesses claimed that none of the bullet-hit students were activists of the JCD. They were forced to join the procession that was brought out by the JCD unit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman Hall, the witnesses said.

A JCD leader, Arif Hossain Taj was killed in a shoot out between the two rival groups in

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**Shima murder
Deposition of
witnesses
begins**

CHITTAGONG, Mar 15: The deposition of the prosecution witnesses in Shima murder case began at anti-child and women repression special court here today, reports BSS.

The first prosecution witness was Iqbal Hossain, Sub-inspector of Raigan police. He made his statement before the Judge Sayed Anayetullah Khan for about three hours.

The prosecution witness was cross-examined by defence lawyer advocate Ehsanul Haq Hena. It will continue tomorrow.

The four accused sub-inspectors Uttam Kumar, constables Sadek Ali, Gour Karmaker and Abul Bashar were produced before the court today.

Shima Chowdhury, a garments worker, was allegedly raped by the police in Raigan police station on December 21 last year.

She died mysteriously in Chittagong Jail on February 7.

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**Yasmin murder
Hearing concludes
in spl court**

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Mar 15: The hearing of the Yasmin rape and murder case concluded in the Special Court, here today.

The prosecution lawyers, who submitted their arguments in the case on March 13, also made supplementary arguments today.

Barrister Anirul Islam and a senior lawyer of Dinajpur Azizur Rahman Mostazir were appointed as special PP by the Law Ministry to help the prosecution conduct the Yasmin rape and murder case.

The defence counsels led by senior advocate of Bogra Majibur Rahman, Abdus Sattar and Abdul Huq Pramanik submitted arguments today strongly denying the allegations.

The CPA chairman said the Q C Shipping had taken prior permission to use its private

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import tax, VAT on generator waived for one year

The government has exempted import tax and VAT on electric generating sets for one year with effect from March 10, an official handout said in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

It said the government has also decided to provide relief in the collection of advanced income tax on generators in consequence with this exemption.

The handout said the government hopes that this arrangement will make generator import easier and contribute to tackling the existing power crisis.

Blaming the Awami League government for doing nothing for the people and everything to please its foreign masters, the opposition leader said, "We have liberated the country not to be integrated with India or governed through dictates from Delhi."

Begum Zia was addressing a gathering at her Minto Road official residence on the occasion

**Khaleda accuses govt
of politicising admin**

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsads and BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia has said appointment of "incompetent persons" in different key positions is the prime reason for the present government's failure in running the country.

She also accused the government of politicising the administration, especially the police department, resulting in the prevailing law and order situation.

Begum Zia was addressing a gathering at her Minto Road official residence on the occasion

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**PM's directive
Supply water,
power in city on
emergency basis**

The government has taken up a Tk 700 crore project for maintenance and development of rural roads in 16 northern districts with the funding from the World Bank, report agencies.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was informed this at a briefing held at the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives in the city yesterday.

The road project is one of the six new projects undertaken by the present government for improvement of various infrastructures and building of new facilities.

The meeting was told that a rural infrastructure and development project at a cost of Tk 80 crore had also been taken for

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Loadshedding
Farmers ransack
TNO office
in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 15: Hundreds of angry farmers ransacked the offices of the Barendra Unnayan Kartripakkha and the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) at Tanore today protesting frequent loadshedding.

More than two thousand farmers gathered at the Thana headquarters and later brought out a procession demanding regular power supply to the paddy fields. They paraded the roads and at one stage attacked the offices of the TNO and the Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority.

Police resorted to lathicharge to bring the situation under control.

Jessore PDB office gheraoed

By Staff Correspondent

JESSORE, Mar 15: Hundreds of people gheraoed the office of the Power Development Board here today protesting repeated power failures in Jessore.

According to sources, Jessore is now getting only 10 to 15 MW power against the daily requirement of 55 megawatt resulting in huge production loss in mills and factories.

Earlier, the Jessore unit of pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) held a rally at the Daratara crossing demanding regular power supply.

**Hartal observed
in Bandarban**

BANDARBN, Mar 15: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in the district today demanding inclusion of non-tribals in the policy making on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), reports UNB.

The newly formed All-Party Bangalee Gano Parishad had called for the hartal also to protest attack on two Bangalee men last week and demanding constitutional rights and equal privileges for the Bangalee people in the CHT.

Bangabandhu's birthday
Diplomats invited
to Tungipara
function

By Staff Correspondent

Heads of diplomatic missions in Dhaka have been invited by the government to attend the special function at Tungipara on March 17 on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the birth of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman.

The diplomats will be flown by helicopters from the old Tejgaon Airport at 8 in the morning.

**Two JCD leaders
arrested during a raid in a Dhaka University hall yesterday.**

—Star photo

**AL national council March 28
Contest for GS post likely**

By Reaz Ahmad

Sheikh Hasina would continue as Awami League chief as there is no possibility of a contest for the post when the ruling party goes into its belated triennial national council in the city on March 28, according to party insiders.