

## SSC exams to continue as per schedule

The remaining examinations of the SSC will be held as per the schedule of five secondary and higher secondary education boards, said a press release of the Dhaka Board last night, reports BSS.

The board authorities said the question paper on agricultural science published in a section of the press yesterday had no similarity with that of the board.

The authorities advised the examinees to devote themselves to study and not to waste their time.

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## Three outsiders arrested from JU hall : Arms recovered

By JU Correspondent

Police arrested three outsiders with arms in their possession from a residential hall of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday.

Earlier, they were assaulted by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists as a sequel to infighting among rival groups.

BCL activists beat the outsiders with iron rods and hockey sticks at around 3 am yesterday after they had assaulted the general secretary of the Kamaluddin Hall unit of the university.

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# 25-year Friendship Treaty with India expires today

By M Anwarul Haq

The 25-year Bangladesh-India Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation expires today.

Talking to The Daily Star State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, when asked to comment, said: "Let there be no song and music signifying the expiry of the agreement."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Abul Kalam Azad are on record stating in recent months that the treaty has outlived its utility and it would not be renewed.

Leader of the Opposition in

Parliament Khaleed Zia, during her tenure as Prime Minister, did not make any comment either criticising the Treaty or suggesting its renewal. However, top ranking BNP leaders on several occasions lambasted the treaty and termed it as an "agreement of slavery." All other opposition parties including Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami had spoken against its renewal.

Senior officials at the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, when asked, said they know nothing about the present or the future of the treaty. In fact, officials,

when asked for a text of the agreement, said they did not have one.

The Treaty between the two neighbouring countries was signed amidst much fanfare and publicity 25 years ago by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then Prime Minister, and his Indian counterpart Indira Gandhi.

Officially called the "Treaty of Friendship, Co-Operation and Peace between India and Bangladesh" the agreement was signed in Dhaka between the two leaders on March 19, 1972 for a term of "twenty-five years"

and said it "shall be subject to renewal by mutual agreement of the High Contracting Parties."

Out of the 12 Articles, the first seven mainly deal with strengthening all round cooperation. The text begins with an affirmation that the Treaty has been "inspired by the ideals for which the respective peoples struggled and made sacrifices together."

Article 8, 9 and 10 deal with mutual cooperation in security aspects, which, according to academics, are the most substantive parts of the Treaty.

Article 8 of the Treaty stated

that the high contracting parties "shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party" and that any "party shall not allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to or constitute a threat to the other party."

Article 9 stated that the "two sides shall refrain from giving any assistance to any third party taking part in an armed conflict against the other party."

Besides, the said Article mentions that "In case either

party is attacked or threatened with attack, they shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to take appropriate measures to eliminate the threat."

Article 10 of the Treaty stated that "the High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that it shall not undertake any commitment, secret or open, toward any one or more States which may be incompatible with the present Treaty."

The present government has maintained that the Treaty has lost its utility in the changed

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## Fresh accord: Work resumes at Chittagong port today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 17: Work will resume at the Chittagong port tomorrow morning, according to an agreement reached between the CBA of workers and the port authorities today.

The private equipment, brought in the port jetty by a shipping agency, which had prompted the wildcat strike by the workers on Saturday, will also be removed before noon tomorrow as per the agreement.

The agreement was reached at a nearly two-hour meeting between the port authorities and the CBA that ended at 10 pm, official sources said.

The trouble began at 2 pm Saturday when Q C Shipping Agency, after taking prior permission from the authorities, took two forklifts inside the port. This prompted the collective bargaining agent (CBA) of the port workers to go for a wildcat strike.

Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority Capt Zahiruddin Mahmud told this correspondent earlier in the day that the strike delayed handling of over 20 vessels.

## Ctg port users' ultimatum

By Staff Correspondent

Port users yesterday issued an ultimatum to the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) that they would go for an indefinite strike unless private equipment is allowed to be used for unloading cargo.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Ship Owners Association, Bangladesh Steamer Agents Association, Chittagong Port C&F Agents Association, Masters and Stevedores Association and the Chittagong Truck Owners Association.

Chaired by Kamal Uddin Ahmed, CCCI Vice President, the meeting was held in the port city yesterday, according to a press release available here last night.

When contacted over phone, CPA Chairman acknowledged issuance of the ultimatum by the port users.

## Death of Shima Probe body goes to Ctg Mar 22

Justice Dalil Uddin Ahmed, who heads the judicial commission to probe the death of Shima Chowdhury in Chittagong jail, will go to the port town next week to listen to the public on the matter, reports BSS.

The people concerned have been requested to testify before Justice Ahmed at Chittagong Circuit House on March 22 and 23 from 10 am to 5 pm. Testimonies at the premises of Bangabandhu's ancestral house, said an official handout.

## Loadshedding Economy shattered, say trade bodies

Acute shortage of electricity and frequent loadshedding have appeared as a major threat to the overall economy, causing huge losses in production worth crores of taka everyday, reports UNB.

The situation is very critical... the loss is huge. The frequent loadshedding is now the major problem of the economy," said A S M Quasem, the President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

Although there is no official statistics of the losses, chambers and trade associations said that over 22 per cent of total working hours were lost during the last few weeks due to loadshedding.

According to a sample survey of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), the production loss due to power failure during 1995-96 fiscal year was Tk 3263.82 crore.

The survey covered 107 units in as many as 12 formal sectors excluding the export-oriented

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## Banking sector reforms discussed with WB team

A World Bank team yesterday held a discussion with the government on banking sector reforms in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria led the government side in the meeting held in his ministry.

During the meeting, he put stress on strengthening the country's banking sector, saying that the present government has already taken different steps in this regard.

The government is committed to completing its reforms

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## Power supply to N-dists resumes 'Tower collapse an act of sabotage'

Government agencies detected the power-tower collapse in Pabna as an act of sabotage, according to an official disclosure made here yesterday, reports UNB.

"After examining one of the collapsed towers, experts found nuts, bolts and plates of all four legs of the tower displaced," the Energy Ministry said in a handout.

As a result, it collapsed. The other tower also broke down as it could not bear the load.

The experts observed that normally it is not possible to dismantle the nuts, bolts and plates of such towers.

"So it has become quite clear that it was a well-planned act by miscreants," said the ministry statement.

A four-member enquiry committee, headed by a chief engineer of PDB, which was formed shortly after the tower collapse, has started investigation. It is expected to submit its enquiry report within this week.

Law-enforcing agency personnel are also active to identify the culprits.

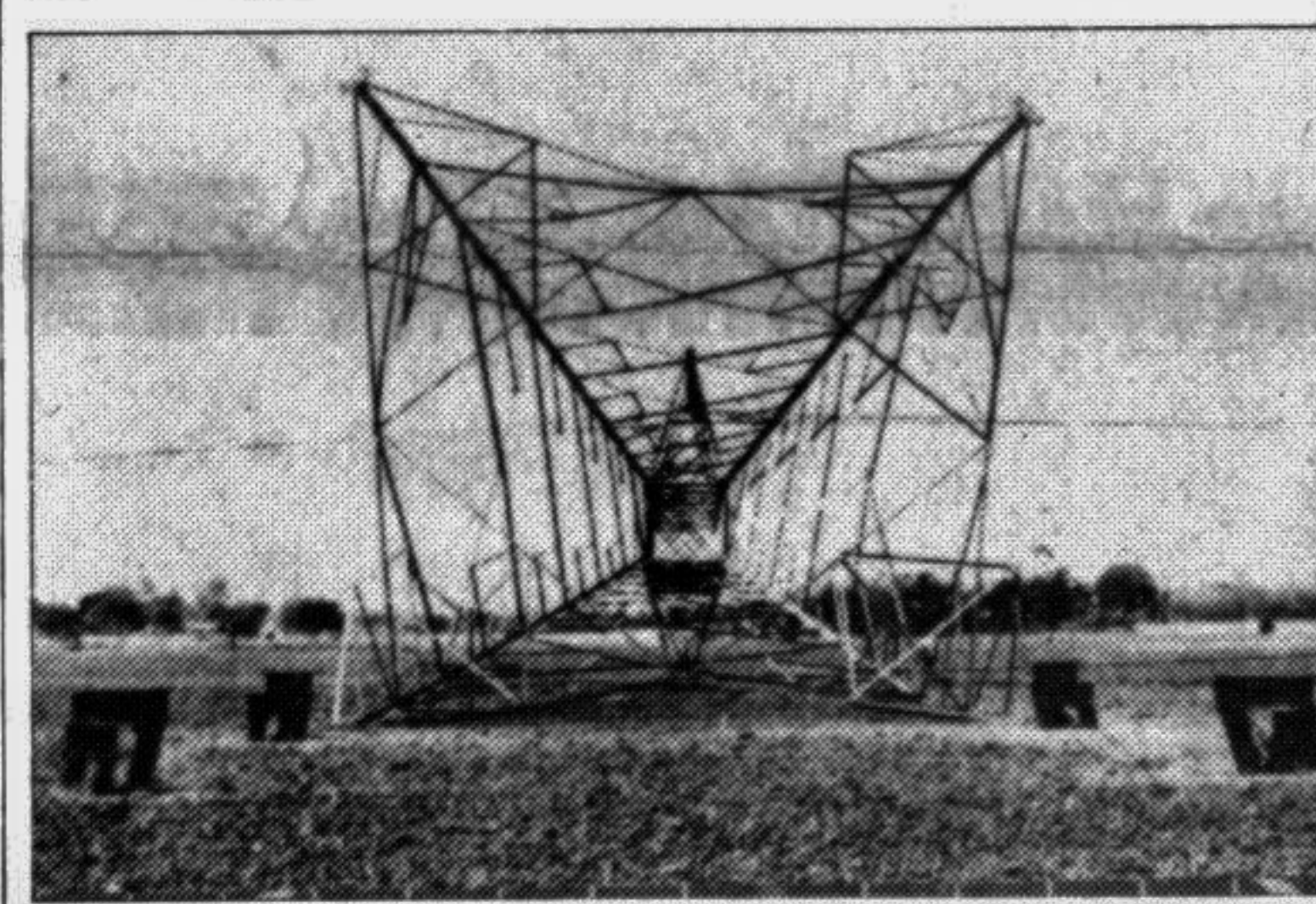
Meanwhile, Power transmission through the 230 KV East-West Interconnector grid line was restored last night through an emergency bypass.

Engineers and technicians of the Power Development Board (PDB) installed a temporary bypass line between the pillar number 40 and 41 at about 8:45 pm, officials said.

PDB Member (transmission) Sarwar Hossain was present on the spot when power transmission to 33 northwestern districts resumed.

The interconnection line snapped following the collapse of two towers on March 14 at Maligacha in sadar thana of the district.

It will take about one and a half months to reinstall the towers.



One of the two towers of the East-West Interconnector Line that collapsed on March 14 at Maligacha in Pabna district. —PID photo

## Loadshedding in Khulna Over 150 mills, factories stop operation

From Amanullah

KHULNA, Mar 17: Loadshedding has forced at least eleven jute mills, the Khulna Hardboard Mills, 56 ice factories, two textile mills and over 100 fish processing plants in the district to stop operation since yesterday morning.

According to a lightly-placed source in the BJMC, deteriorating loadshedding has crippled the eleven government-owned jute mills with about 24 thousand workers sitting idle.

Superintending Engineer of BJMC M H Khan issued an order yesterday for closing the jute mills till March 23 due to loadshedding.

The eleven jute mills normally produce 700 metric tonnes of jute worth over two crore taka daily. The management of the mills will have to pay Tk 35 lakh to the workers despite suspension of production till March 23, sources in the BJMC said.

A large number of power-dependent small industries have also been closed. Exportable frozen shrimps worth over 200 crore taka and twenty lakh maunds of potatoes stored in the ice plants are also on the brink of damage due to loadshedding.

Khulna city needs 100 MW electricity daily. But till Sunday, supply was 18 megawatt only, said SE of PDB.

The Deputy Director of Health confirmed that eighty percent patients have left hospitals due to loadshedding. The loadshedding has also caused an alarming rise in crimes in Khulna.

## Farmers worried, businesses count losses in 21 dists

By Shehab Ahmed with Inam Ahmed, back from Jessore

Twenty-one districts in the north and south western Bangladesh reeling under erratic power supply now face a bleak prospect in farming, businesses and industries counting lost productions and cold storages in danger of losing frozen foods for exports unless the situation improves soon.

During a visit to the outlying areas of Jessore on Sunday, The Daily Star correspondents found farmers scurrying for diesel-run pumps to compensate for the idle pumps powered by electricity. Power supply was disrupted on Friday when two pylons of the East-West interconnector collapsed at a remote village in Pabna.

Dark green fields in the rich alluvial plains of Jessore promised another bumper harvest of HYV rice. But the farmers are getting worried. They need water most at this time of the year.

Unless they get connected to the power lines they face trouble, a senior correspondent who works for a national daily said sitting in his desk, lighted by a candle.

Officials said the 21 districts in the north and south-west requires 309 MW of power, consuming about 14 per cent of the national grids' supply. Jessore and its neighbouring districts of Satkhira, Narail, Magura, Jhenaidah, Chuadanga and Meherpur requires 100 MW daily.

Farmers in the region grouped under 3600 peasant groups targeted to irrigate some 2,2300 acres of HYV rice fields using electric pumps this season. But they started to face the crunch, when power supply became irregular under country-wide loadshedding earlier.

They needed 20 MW of power. But they were receiving one-fifth of the power as supply was rationed in the wake of the crisis.

Angry farmers staged protests in Navaron, Jhikorgacha, Kaliganj, Monirampur and Noapara. Last week, the offices of Pallibiddyt Samity and Power Development Board were attacked or damaged at Monirampur, Keshabpur and Noapara.

Apprehending further trouble, the authorities had to deploy extra police in different PDB offices which like the Jessore town office faced angry citizens on Saturday, leaving their personnel fleeing. Earlier,

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President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offering prayers after placing wreaths at the Mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Tungipara yesterday. —PID photo

## Govt flexing muscles to its shadow: BNP

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the government has begun a war against an imaginative enemy and is flexing muscles to its own shadow, reports UNB.

"When the entire country plunged into a darkness due to unabated loadshedding, the government is trying to hush up its failure blaming others for it," he told a party meeting.

Some business personalities from Rangpur, led by vice president of Rotary Club Rangpur Kawsar Zaman Babla, joined the BNP at the meeting held its central office.

The BNP leader said within eight months of taking power the ruling party has proved itself worthless and unsuccessful.

"Country's independence and sovereignty have been endangered due to subservient policy

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## Hajj office opens near ZIA

A Hajj office has been opened in the makeshift Hajj camp at Ashkona near Zia International Airport (ZIA) to facilitate the pilgrims, reports UNB.

The Hajj pilgrims, if they need any information, have been requested to contact the office over telephone, said an official handout yesterday.

Phone numbers: 891007, 891456 and 891006.

## JP grand rally today

The Jatiya Party (JP) will hold a grand rally at Manik Mia Avenue in the city at 2 pm today, reports UNB.

Former President and JP Chairman H M Ershad will address the rally.

It will be the first public appearance of deposed President Ershad in the capital after his release on bail on January 9.

## Bangabandhu's birthday Tungipara wears a festive look

From Nazmul Ashraf

TUNGIPARA, Mar 17: The birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed here today with state honour for the first time in the country's history.

Today was the 77th anniversary of the birth of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths and offered Fataha at morning in presence of ministers, Awami League MPs, diplomats of 31 countries, chiefs of three services and other dignitaries. They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul of the great leader.

After placing the wreath, the President and the PM stood in solemn silence for sometime when the bugle played the last post. The President and the PM placed wreaths separately but almost at the same time.

After the President and the Prime Minister, cabinet members, leaders of the ruling Awami League and its front organisations and different socio-cultural bodies, intellectuals and individuals placed bouquets at the Mazar.

The entire Tungipara wore a festive look on the occasion. People of all walks of life started thronging Bangabandhu's Tungipara residence, his birth-place, since early morning. Banners, festoons and portraits of Bangabandhu were hung and his recorded speech was played at different points.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inaugurated a cultural function presented by children and juveniles at the premises of Bangabandhu's ancestral house.

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**Grand Opening on 21st March**

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**MONNO মুন্স ফেব্রিক্স লিমিটেড**

৯, ওয়ারার স্ট্রিট, ওয়ারারী, ঢাকা-১২০৩

**মুন্স ফেব্রিক্স লিমিটেডের বিনিয়োগকারী এবং শেয়ার হোল্ডারদের প্রতি সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

সম্প্রতি কর্তৃপক্ষ লক্ষ্য করেছেন যে, কতিপয় অসাধু ব্যক্তি/ব্যক্তিবর্গ মুন্স ফেব্রিক্স লিমিটেডের শেয়ার সার্টিফিকেট জাল করে নকল শেয়ার, বাজারে বিক্রির তৎপরতা চালাচ্ছে। এ উদ্দেশ্যে সম্মানিত বিনিয়োগকারী/শেয়ার হোল্ডার/শেয়ার ক্রেতা ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে যে, তাহারা যেন শেয়ার ক্রেতার পূর্বে শেয়ার সার্টিফিকেট ও আনুষঙ্গিক কাগজ-পত্র অবশ্যই পুংখানুপুংখরূপে পরীক্ষা নিরীক্ষা করে নেন এবং UN-IDENTIFIED ব্যক্তি বা ব্যক্তিবর্গের নিকট থেকে শেয়ার ক্রেতা বিরত থাকেন।

নকল শেয়ার সার্টিফিকেটের জন্য কোম্পানী কোনরূপ দায়-দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করবে না।

— কর্তৃপক্ষ