

Tk 245 crore
UNDP grant
for 8 new
projects

Bangladesh will receive US 57 million dollars, equivalent to Tk 245 crore, as grant aid from UNDP for eight new projects, according to agreements signed in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

The grant aid will be spent for four community empowerment projects (3 rural and 1 urban), three projects for good governance which will strengthen the Election Commission and Parliament, and build capacity for local governance, and one for non-formal employment generation.

This is the first tranche of programmes formulated by the

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Emeka Anyaku arrives today

Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaku arrives in Dhaka this afternoon on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan will receive him at the Zia International Airport.

During the visit, he will meet the President, the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, the Chief Election Commissioner, and cabinet members.

The Commonwealth Secretary General will also meet Leader of the Opposition.

He will leave Dhaka for Singapore enroute to Australia on Saturday.

Velayati due today

Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Ali Akbar Velayati arrives in Dhaka today on a two-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He will carry an invitation letter for Bangladesh to attend the OIC summit to be held in Iranian capital Tehran in December this year.

The Iranian Foreign Minister will call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He is also expected to have talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdus Samad Azad on matters of mutual interest of the two countries.

Power crisis

Shops have to be closed at 7 pm

Shops have to be closed at 7 pm in the evening instead of eight, an official handout said in the city last night, reports BSS.

The order comes into effect immediately and will remain valid for three months.

However, the changed timing of closure of shops will not be effective in case of vegetables, fish, meat and drug stores and also petrol pump, the handout said.

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No more cooperation : Khaleda

BNP calls 8-hour hartal on Mar 23

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia has announced a four-day agitation programme from today ending with an eight-hour hartal across the country on March 23 to 'undo the conspiracy to turn the country into a province of India'.

The planned 6 am to 2 pm hartal is the first such programme against the nine-month-old government of Sheikh Hasina.

The hartal will be preceded by country-wide programmes of meeting cross-sections of people today, holding rallies and demonstrations tomorrow and bringing out torch processions the day after, the former

prime minister told a huge public meeting in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday afternoon.

City unit of BNP organised the meeting, protesting 'sell-out of the country through a fresh 'slavery treaty' giving transit to India, plan to import power from that country, acute crisis of power, gas and water,' the opposition leader said.

She called upon all 'nationalist and patriotic' people to participate in the programmes beginning today if they 'really loved' the country.

"By observing these programmes, we'll let people understand who want to protect

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Khaleda goes to Pabna tomorrow

BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Pabna Town Hall premises tomorrow, reports UNB.

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a rally in front of the National Press Club yesterday. —Star photo

Health officials tell PM

Delay in funding slows project implementation

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government wants to provide health service to all through a coordinated and well-planned policy, reports UNB.

"We have started the struggle for economic emancipation and health is a very important sector in this struggle," she said during her visit to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the morning.

Hasina directed the officials to take all steps to bring fundamental changes in the health service and make health service available to all at the earliest.

The Prime Minister laid em-

AL activists in Sylhet protest formation of ad hoc body

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 19: Some doors and windows of the Circuit House here were damaged by the agitated activists of Awami League and its front organisations this afternoon when election of district AL committee was postponed and an *ad hoc* committee was announced.

Minister for Industries and Commerce and AL President Tofael Ahmed who was entrusted with the task of conducting the conferences of four district AL committees of Sylhet division, faced a strong protest when he announced

Till February of the current fiscal year, the progress of dif-

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Report on autonomy of TV, Betar by June 30

The Commission for Formulating Policy to give autonomy to Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television will place its report before the government by June 30. Four chapters of the report have already been completed.

The 18-member commission, led by M Asafuddolova, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday and apprised her of the commission's progress.

During the meeting, "the Commission discussed different steps already taken by the government and suggested some more measures for giving autonomy to the state-run institutions.

Gulshan police could not

provide further details.

List of tribal refugees submitted

Talks today to work out repatriation schedule

KHAGRAKHARI, Mar 19: The Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari will meet with the district magistrate concerned in Tripura tomorrow to work out a repatriation schedule for the tribal refugees in the Indian state of Tripura, reports UNB.

The district administration-level meeting between the two governments at Udayapur Rest House in Tripura will finalise the schedule, including dates, crossing points and reception camps, before beginning the repatriation.

According to the joint declaration made earlier at the government-level, return of the self-exiled tribal refugees to

their homesteads in the Chittagong Hill Tracts will begin on March 28.

The tribal leaders have already submitted to the Tripura state government a list of the refugees willing to return home.

The list will be handed over to the Bangladeshi side at the district-level meeting tomorrow.

A five-member delegation, led by Khagrachhari DC Mohammad Ismail, went to Tripura through Ramgarh thana ghat today. The delegation will return on Friday.

The other delegation mem-

bers are: Khagrachhari SP Aminul Islam, ADC (General) Lehaj Uddin Chowdhury.

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50 pc rise in crimes reported to police

By Masud Arif

The incidents of crime reported to police in the city increased by 51.40 per cent in January this year compared to that during the corresponding period of last year.

According to statistics available from Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), 1,623 cases were lodged with 15 thanas of the metropolis in January last as against 1,072 in January 1996.

Some senior police officials, however, claimed that the incidents of crime had decreased a lot though the number of reported cases had increased sharply.

"We do not want to suppress reporting of crimes to police," said an official of the DMP, adding that they were encouraging the city dwellers to develop a habit of reporting to police

any sort of problem they faced.

The statistics of January this year, its previous month and January 1996 showed that only the incidents of murder decreased while various other crimes mainly theft, burglary and kidnapping increased.

The number of cases increased much in Sutrapur, Mirpur, Uttara, Gulshan, Kotwali, Shabujbagh and Ramna thanas.

A total of 1,432 cases were filed with the 15 thanas in December, 1996, while 831 cases were recorded in the first fortnight of February this year.

"I think that the common allegation against police of not taking case in thanas has changed now a days," claimed a senior police official. He added that instructions had been

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