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PM's directive to form task force for 8 edn boards

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday ordered immediate constitution of a task force to improve the management of the eight education boards, reports UNB.

She also directed the authorities to unearth the cause of SSC question-paper leakage and asked them to go for full-proof package and storage system of question-papers.

The task force will look after the activities of five secondary and higher secondary education boards, one madrasah education board, one technical education board, and national curriculum and textbook board.

It will give its report within three months recommending ways for augmenting efficiency and ensuring transparency of the eight education boards of the country.

The Prime Minister gave the directives during a briefing session. See Page 12 Col 4

Gunmen fire on BNP procession at Feni: Jubo Dal leader killed

FENI, Mar 29: Gunmen fired on a BNP procession killing a Jubo Dal leader and injuring two others during a half-day hartal here today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, a bullet pierced the chest of Sharifuddin Nasir, 25, member of the district convening committee of Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal, the youth front of BNP, as the gunmen fired on the procession during the hartal enforced to protest Thursday's killing of another activist of the party.

He was first taken to Feni Medical College Hospital and from there to the Modern Hospital in a critical condition. He died at about 12:30 pm while being shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

BNP leaders blamed ruling party "terrorists" for the armed attack on their procession in front of PTI on Truck Road.

Nasir's body was sent to his Swardagbari village home at Rampur on the outskirts of the district town. Later, autopsy of the body was done at the sadar hospital.

Police and hospital sources said Jubo Dal district convenor Monwar Hossain Dulal, 28, and Harunur Rashid, a member of the committee, suffered serious bullet wounds in the attack.

They were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka as their condition deteriorated.

Bullets hit Dulal on his back and Harun in his left-chest during the "indiscriminate" firing. Two other people also received minor injuries during the attack.

Huge contingent of police and BDR were deployed at important points as tension gripped the town.

The eight-hour shutdown was enforced by the main opposition party to protest Thursday's killing of the Vice-President of sadar thana unit of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, Ashfaqur Rahman Tushar, 22.

During the hartal hours, offices, court, schools and colleges were shut while all modes of transport were off the road.

Road communications with from thanas of the district were snapped. Some buses, however, plied on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway through Feni bypass under police protection.

BNP activists staged demonstration and rally in front of the. See Page 12 Col 1

BNP announces fresh action programme tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The main opposition BNP ends today its 28-day agitation programme against, what it says, anti-people and repressive measures of the Awami League government.

The countrywide programme of rallies and street agitation began on March 3. The 28-day programme was also marked by a nationwide half-day hartal on March 23, to protest "giving transit to India."

On the concluding day today, the BNP is scheduled to hold demonstrations at the district and thana headquarters across the country.

"We'll announce our next course of action at a press conference in the city sometime Monday," BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP told 'The Daily Star' last night. He, however, said they were yet to finalise the schedule of the press conference and the details of the fresh agitation programme to be announced there. See Page 12 Col 2

Sub-regional cooperation Joint statement on concept Apr 2

By M Anwarul Haq

Stage is set for formal launching of the concept of sub-regional cooperation among four South Asian countries through a joint statement on April 2 in Kathmandu following a day-long meeting of the foreign secretaries concerned.

A special meeting of the foreign ministers of the four countries involved in the proposed sub-regional grouping is likely to take place in Delhi on April 6 on the sidelines of the 12th Non-Aligned Meet (NAM) of foreign ministers in the Indian capital from April 4 to 8.

The special meeting is likely to put the final seal of approval to the new concept, diplomatic sources said.

The foreign secretaries meet in the Nepalese capital is likely to spell out jointly the concept of the proposed grouping among the four geographically contiguous countries — Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial meeting was held yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, chaired by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury to finalise Bangladesh's position on the new concept. The meeting was attended by State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and around a dozen secretaries, sources said.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan is due to present a concept paper while Nepal has already circulated an approach paper, the sources indicated. Indian External Affairs Secretary Salman Haider and the Bhutanese Foreign Secretary are expected to make deliberations. They may also present theme papers.

Farooq Sobhan is leaving Dhaka for Kathmandu tomorrow, two days ahead in preparation for the meeting.

The Kathmandu meeting is expected to last for two days. See Page 12 Col 4

Share scam Lobby active for shelving probe report

Star Report

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria has reiterated the government's commitment for transparency and accountability and said his ministry is determined to pursue to the very end the stock market scam and take measures to stop its recurrence.

He also said once the review of the probe report is completed, the document will be made public through the press.

The Daily Star has learnt that a powerful business lobby in alliance with a section of the brokers identified in the probe report for the manipulation of the stock market is trying to put pressure on the government to shelve the report or prevent its findings from becoming public.

This lobby is pursuing the line that share market is a sensitive place and any remarks on it published in the press or government action taken against them, would bring severe repercussion on the stock market.

See Page 12 Col 6

Flow at Farakka low: Calcutta urges Delhi for talks with Dhaka

By Monitoring Staff

The West Bengal government has urged the central government of India to sit with Bangladesh to carry out a survey on the flow of water at the Farakka point, according to a BBC broadcast last night.

Amal Kumar Sarkar, Irrigation Secretary of West Bengal told journalists yesterday that the flow of water at Farakka came down to around 50,000 cusec this month from its normal flow of around 60,000 cusec in March in the past.

According to Sarkar, the current month's flow is the lowest recorded since 1993 and the situation may deteriorate further due to scanty rainfall. He said 60,000 cusec water was necessary to keep the Calcutta port navigable.

"The water accord was signed considering that 60,000 cusec of water would be available at Farakka point," the Irrigation Secretary said.

West Bengal government has urged the central government of India to talk to Bangladesh on the issue "for this year only in view of the special circumstances."

Bangladesh move into second round

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 29: Bangladesh moved into the second round of the ICC Trophy with a one-sided win over the United Arab Emirates here today, reports AFP.

Defending ICC Trophy champions UAE were expected to dish out a strong challenge, but in the end Bangladesh sauntered to a handsome 110-run win to book their berth in the final eight.

Bangladesh, who are seeking to atone for their failures of the past, were in no mood to allow UAE, who played at the last World Cup, any chance to prevail over them.

The Bangladeshis have never played in the company of the Test-playing nations at the World Cup. The closest they came to qualifying was at the 1990 ICC Trophy in Holland, when they entered the finals but were beaten by Zimbabwe.

Since then, Zimbabwe have joined the ranks of the Test-playing nations and the World Cup has increased its patronage by allowing three associate members to qualify.

At the last ICC Trophy in Kenya, Bangladesh floundered in the semifinals losing to Kenya and then to the horror of the country's cricket-crazy fans, they were pipped by Holland in the third place play-off.

Coached by former West Indian Test opener Gordon Greenidge, Bangladesh are now determined to forget previous. See Page 12 Col 3



Probe report 3 main causes of revolt in Jessore jail

By Staff Correspondent

The judicial inquiry committee formed to investigate the revolt in the Jessore Central Jail, in its report, has identified three main causes of the incident in December last, according to sources concerned.

The causes are: Cancellation of remission of sentence for a section of prisoners by the caretaker government in June 1996, reports published in a section of the press claiming release of 10,000 prisoners from various jails on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Victory, and instigation by a particular political party.

According to the sources, the committee report pointed out that corruption and inefficiency of the prison officials are responsible for the revolt.

The probe body comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan was formed immediately after the jail authorities submitted its 102-page report to the Ministry of Home the recently. See Page 12 Col 7



The city experienced the season's first heavy shower yesterday evening. — Star photo

ADB suggests string of reforms to revamp capital market

By Inam Ahmed and Shehab Ahmed

A fact-finding mission from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has suggested a string of reforms, backed by an 80 million US dollar loan and World Bank, IMF and other donor support, to revamp and modernise the fledgling capital market in the country.

ADB has also proposed to set up an Asset Management Company (AMC) with foreign and local sponsors for establishing a Capital Market Development Mutual Fund (CMDMF). It will undertake equity investments in capital market institutions to fill up gaps in the institutional infrastructure of the domestic capital market.

This CMDMF will also invest and take a minority stake in state-owned enterprises which may be offered for privatisation to assist the government's divestiture programme.

ADB also proposes to establish an Infrastructure Debt Fund (IDF) to provide guarantees to foreign financial institutions for giving medium to long-term financing for private sector infrastructure projects.

Among others, it recommended restructuring of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), strengthening of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), integration of stock exchange operations, tax incentives for listed companies, reduction of government preemption of insurance, and pension and provident funds and consequent cost of borrowing from the market, and compensation to employees affected by privatisation during the programme period.

The fund is likely to be available, subject to approval of the ADB management, by the end of the year, according to an ADB report available to 'The Daily Star' yesterday.

In an Aide Memoir on the Proposed Capital Market Sector Development Programme Loan (CMSDFL), the mission, which held a wrap up meeting on March 24, urged the government to provide its concurrence to it not later than April 5 to enable it (mission) to have discussions with the ADB management and take further action in this regard.

The mission which had been to Bangladesh between March 11-25 had discussed with the officials broad agenda for reform of the domestic capital market and defined the major components of the proposed CMSDFL.

The objectives of the proposed CMSDFL are to broaden the scope for domestic resource mobilisation by developing the capital market to raise the low savings and investment rates in Bangladesh which are among the most serious constraints to more rapid economic growth and to improvement of the efficiency of resource allocation, it said.

The CMSDFL will achieve these by aiming at creating a policy environment conducive to capital market development through a programme of policy reforms to be supported by an ADB loan, establishing the institutional infrastructure of the capital market and organising institutional vehicles for mobilising funds to meet critical infrastructural and industrial. See Page 12 Col 6

AL protest rally in city Apr 7

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League will hold a rally in the city on April 7 to protest the throwing of bricks at the motorcade of Palestine President Yasser Arafat, destructive activities in power and other sectors and attempts to create anarchy in the country.

Prime Minister and AL president Sheikh Hasina will address the rally to be held at Panthapath at 3 pm, said a party press release.

Meanwhile, the AL will observe today as the 'Day of Mass Uprising and Fall of the Autocrat' marking the first anniversary. See Page 12 Col 7

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Nor' wester in city 2 garments workers electrocuted

By Staff Correspondent

Two teenage garments workers were electrocuted as a power supply line got snapped near the Green Super Market in Farmgate area during a nor' wester in the city yesterday evening.

The victims were identified as Fatema, 15, of Rayer Bazar, and Aysha, 16, of Sukrabad. They were immediately taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared them dead, hospital sources said.

The girls who were working in Alif Fashion Ltd in Farmgate area met with the accident when they were returning home at about 8 pm.

Private firm to look after Nagar Bhaban

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has handed over the responsibility of maintenance of the Nagar Bhaban to a private firm, sources in the DCC said.

The responsibility was given recently following DCC's failure to maintain its own premises, an official said. This will cost the DCC some three crore taka over a period of two years, the source said.

After completion of the Nagar Bhaban in 1994, forty sweepers were assigned to do the job. But the interior of the monumental Nagar Bhaban was left 'almost unattended and in a dirty condition', the officials said.

A source in the Nagar Bhaban's caretaker section said that most of the sweepers were regularly being used as office peons and so they could not do their actual job properly.

Talks on bilateral ties held China to provide \$3.6m soft loan: Accord today

China will provide more development assistance to Bangladesh and begin a survey soon for the construction of the fifth friendship bridge in the country, reports UNB.

The visiting Chinese Vice Premier Luo Gan stated this when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganabhaban yesterday.

He also told the Prime Minister that an agreement for providing Bangladesh with soft loan of 30 million yuan (US dollars 3.6 million) would be signed here today.

Luo, the senior-most Chinese leader after the death of Deng Xiaoping, recalled that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's visit to China in fifties had a special significance in the context of age-old friendship between Bangladesh and China.

Welcoming the Vice Premier, who is also the Secretary General of the State Council of China, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh's friendship with China is very warm and her first official visit to China bore the testimony of it.

The Prime Minister extended an invitation to the Chinese President and the Premier to visit Bangladesh.

Another report says, Bangladesh and China agreed to bolster ties in all spheres of bilateral cooperation in the changed context.

An agreement to this effect was reached at an official talk between the two countries in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

The meeting also focused on the present trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. In this connection, Luo Gan said a trade mission from his country would visit Bangladesh shortly.

Luo briefed Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad about his government's steps towards enhancing cooperation and understanding with all friendly countries, particularly neighbouring Asian nations.

He said the Bangladesh foreign minister would be invited to visit Hong Kong after return of the island to China in July. See Page 12 Col 3

Kidnapped Jamaat leader and his brother-in-law found dead

JHENIDAH, Mar 29: Police here today recovered the bodies of two men who were kidnapped from a village in Sadar thana of Kushtia district eight days ago, reports UNB.

They were identified as Lutfar Rahman, 45, Kushtia Sadar thana unit Naeb-e-Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami and his brother-in-law Shawkat Ali, 40, of village Abdalpur.

Unidentified gunmen kidnapped them on March 22 when they were going to Kamarkhali village from Zoradha in Hari-nakundu thana of the Jhenidah district.

Police recovered the bodies from the dried out Kumar river near Manoharpur village at about 10 am.

They said the killings might be a sequel to another incident in which one Shahidul of the village was killed in the first week of March.

IPH vaccine lab out of production since '85

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Vaccine Laboratory under the Institute of Public Health (IPH) in Mahakhali has been lying idle since 1985, sources at the IPH disclosed.

The laboratory, which produced cholera, TAB and TBC vaccines, has been out of production as all the three vaccines were declared 'obsolete' by the World Health Organisation with the invention of modern vaccines. In 1985, the laboratory produced small quantities. See Page 12 Col 1

Japan to invest \$68.88m in 5 priority projects

Japan has shown interest to invest in five priority projects worth 68.88 million US dollars, officials said yesterday.

The fund will be provided as grant. The government has sought Japanese assistance for its 13 priority projects worth 200.37 million US dollars for the fiscal year 1996-97.

The officials told BSS that a series of planning (minutes) discussions on these projects are going on for signing agreements in between June and December this year. The discussion on the remaining eight projects is expected to start immediately after finalising the agreements of the five projects, they hoped adding "Japan, the major bilateral donor country is now very much interested to invest in Bangladesh due to stable political situation."

The five priority projects of 10-million dollar reconstruction of five bridges on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, 10.22 million dollar rehabilitation of Dhaka television, 12.66 dollar weather warning services related to national disaster, 10-million dollar poultry management and technic intervention and about 20 million dollar Meghna river protection.

According to the sources at the Economic Relations Division (ERD), the minutes discussions on the two projects — rehabilitation of Dhaka television and weather warning services relating to the national disaster, were held this month and the agreements are expected to be signed by July this year. A three-member Japanese team. See Page 12 Col 7

Horror still haunts many of the tribal refugees

From Nurul Alam

years ago and took shelter at Katalchhari camp in Tripura.

Aunga alleged that his house was torched at night by miscreants, forcing them to cross the border.

In an emotion-choked voice Aunga said he was returning today with a broken heart as his wife died of disease in the camp four years ago. Aunga said his

420 more return on second day

KHAGRACHHARI, Mar 29: Four hundred and twenty tribal refugees of 99 families returned home today on the second day of repatriation from the Indian state of Tripura, reports UNB.

Lutfar Rahman, the additional district magistrate of Khagrachhari and convenor of Ramgarh reception centre, welcomed the refugees from 9:50 am to 12:30 pm.

After giving them cash and. See Page 12 Col 8

son Mongshapru was only six when they fled their home and his two daughters were born in the camp.

Mongshapru said, "I want to go back to my home but if any trouble breaks out I will go back to India again."

Oimala Vikku 50, a tribal Buddhist monk, dressed in a pale yellow robe was found sitting inside the makeshift camp with his belongings along with four other monks. When asked Oimala said that he lived in a temple named Boranala Keyang at Tobalchhari village under Matirana police station of Khagrachhari hill district.

When violence erupted in the surrounding areas in 1987, he fled the temple and took shelter in a camp in Tripura. Oimala said.

"But still it is uncertain whether I can stay in the same temple peacefully after repatriation," he said.

Chairman of the Refugee. See Page 12 Col 3

Contraband worth Tk 1 cr seized in 10 days

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) during a 10-day drive in five districts recovered contraband Indian goods and black stones worth about Tk eleven crore.

During a raid on the house of one Amir Uddin in Noapara thana under Jessore district on March 23, the BDR seized six black stones worth about Tk 9.60 crore, said a press release of BDR last night.

After raiding different areas. See Page 12 Col 8

Ershad advised full bed rest

RANGPUR, Mar 29: Jatiya Party chairman and former president H M Ershad today cancelled his scheduled four-day tour of the northern districts and left for Dhaka.

G M Kader, MP, younger brother of Ershad, told BSS that after attending a public meeting at Nilphamari yesterday Ershad rushed back to Rangpur circuit house as he fell ill.

This morning he (Ershad) again felt severe chest pain and was shifted to Rangpur Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where a medical board held a thorough check-up and advised him full bed rest.