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3 children burnt alive in city slum fire

By Staff Correspondent

At least three children, two of them sisters, were burnt alive in a fire at a slum in Pallabi in the city Friday night.

The victims were identified as Jyotsna, 5, and Sharmim, 3, daughters of one Abul Kashem, and Parul, 4, daughter of Abul Kalam. They were caught in the fire which razed through the slum at Bauniabad, Pallabi, in Mirpur Section-11, police and fire service sources said.

Their parents were outside the houses when the fire broke out.

About eight makeshift houses were damaged in the fire.

Police, quoting the local people said the fire originated from a lamp in a house at about 10:30 pm Friday.

Fire fighters took about an hour to extinguish the fire. They handed over the bodies to the Pallabi police.

The bodies were later sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

PM calls on President

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban and discussed with him the overall situation of the country, reports UNB.

An official at Bangabhaban did not disclose what specific issues the Prime Minister had discussed with the President, but said during the meeting the Prime Minister discussed the programmes to observe the Mujibnagar Day.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed is likely to attend the main function of the day at Mujibnagar on April 17.

Hasina also apprised him of her intention to perform Hajj this year.

Later, Home Minister Major (Rtd) Rafiqul Islam also called on the President at Bangabhaban. He also told the President that he is going to Mekka to perform Hajj this year.

Steps to check leakage of HSC question papers

A meeting of the chairmen of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Boards was held yesterday with Education Minister A S H K Sadique in the chair, reports UNB.

The meeting reviewed different preparatory activities of the HSC examination, beginning on May 8.

It decided to ensure that the question papers are protected from leakage while being sent to district level.

Besides, the meeting also decided that the deputy commissioners and TNOs would examine the trunks containing the question papers before the start of examination.

Khaleda's Khulna rally today

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting today at the Khulna Circuit House ground, reports UNB.

Central and local leaders of the party will also address the meeting organised by Khulna District and City BNP, said a press release yesterday.

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JICA report on industrialisation of Ctg presented to PM

Special Economic Zone Act to be promulgated

The government, on principle, has decided to promulgate the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act under which concentrated industrial belts would be set up in particular areas for rapid industrialisation and economic growth of the country, report agencies.

The decision came when the study report on industrial development of Chittagong region was placed before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her secretariat office yesterday.

The study, conducted by the Japan Industrial Cooperation Agency (JICA), was designed to formulate a comprehensive plan for the industrial development of Chittagong region, the national gateway having international port facilities and an inherited trade and industrial base.

Under the 'SEZ' Act, Chittagong Development Company (CDC) would be set up for rapid expansion of industries in the region.

The JICA study report suggested development of Chittagong as the country's industrial heartland considering its 'geo-strategic position'.

The plan, which estimates a preliminary infrastructure development cost of 1.39 billion US dollars, aims at concentrating growth in particular area for a rapid development of the country.

The Japanese agency even suggested that an industrial triangle could be developed around the Bay of Bengal with Chittagong as its centre.

"Considering the geo-strategic position of Bangladesh and natural harbour or port location of Chittagong in the broader perspective, an industrial triangle can be conceived around the Bay of Bengal with Chittagong region and Chittagong port at its apex," it said.

One side of the triangle will cover Calcutta, Madras, Colombo and other side Yangon, Phuket, Penang, even as far as Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

In consideration of geographical and functional characteristics of Bangladesh, it is logical consequence that Chittagong should be developed as the primary industrial base, the report said.

JICA consultant Itaru Mae placed the report in the meeting with the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was appreciative of the report and asked the BOI (Board of Investment) to study it meticulously and bring well-thought-out proposal to the Cabinet for approval.

She expressed optimism that the country would be brought under some more Special Economic Zones in phases for overall economic development through rapid industrialisation.

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Gowda to continue as caretaker PM

Intense parleys to form new govt, avoid snap polls

NEW DELHI, Apr 12: A day after voting out the government, the Congress Party said today it is willing to again support the minority coalition if it replaces its leader, H D Deve Gowda, reports AP.

The United Front maintained an official position that it would not choose another leader.

All three major political groups huddled day and night to try and form another government to avoid a general election.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma has not yet decided to ask any group to form a government.

Shortly after Gowda lost a confidence vote in parliament Friday midnight, Sharma asked him to continue as caretaker prime minister until alternate arrangements can be made. Gowda cannot take major policy decisions now.

All political parties want to avoid the expense and the uncertainty of another election. The last one was held in May and resulted in a hung parliament with no party or bloc winning a majority.

Gowda's 14-party coalition met in his house twice today. Party spokesman Jaipal Reddy said the group will not support a new government led by either the Congress Party or the Bharatiya Janata Party.

"The question of change in leadership does not arise because no such proposal was moved by anyone on the steering committee," Reddy said.

The Front faces the problem of finding a suitable replacement to Gowda, given the intense rivalries among its regional leaders. The new leader also must be acceptable to the Congress, whose support it needs to form a government.

Congress forced Gowda's defeat in the confidence vote and triggered a political crisis by withdrawing support for his 10-month-old government.

While Congress has staked its own claim to try to form a government, it has also indicated it might consider supporting the Front again if it changes

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BNP demonstration at dist HQs today

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will hold demonstrations at all the district headquarters and submit memoranda to the Deputy Commissioners today to protest the government activities opposed to the interest of the people and the country.

As part of the countrywide programme, the Dhaka district unit of BNP will organise a rally in front of the party's Nayabazar city office at 10 am and later submit a memorandum to the DC of Dhaka, said a press release.

Meanwhile, the BNP has delivered the civic reception to its four leaders released from jail recently. The reception which was scheduled for tomorrow will now be held after Eid-ul-Azha. A fresh date will be announced later.

Rebel leaders of JP place 4-pt demand

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Presidium members Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Shah Moazzam Hossain, after a meeting here yesterday, announced a four-point demand for immediate implementation.

Kazi Zafar Ahmed, another JP Presidium member who was recently expelled from the party, also attended the meeting held at the residence of Shah Moazzam Hossain, according to meeting sources.

The demands are: convening of a council session of the party

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JP bound to split: Mannan Bhuiyan

By Nazmul Ashraf

and dropping of Zinat Hossain from the presidium, the BNP secretary general said. "Zinat is just a pretext... In fact, the party has plunged into deep crisis over its stance on the crucial political issues."

Replying to a question, Mannan Bhuiyan commented, "For a person like Ershad (the JP chief), it will be very difficult to survive in the national politics."

He denied his reported secret contacts with the JP 'rebels' but said his party will forge unity with any party, group or individual willing to fight against the government and for safeguarding the country's independence, democracy and national interest.

"We want to launch agitation against the government's mis-

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Bangladesh's medium-pacer Khaled Mahmud Sujon (2nd from right) being congratulated by teammates after having Kenya's Sandeep Gupta caught and bowled for 16 during the final of the ICC Trophy in Kuala Lumpur Yesterday.

Dhaka keeping close watch over changes in Delhi

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka is closely watching the political developments in New Delhi following the fall of Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda's 14-party United Front Government.

"We are monitoring the political scene in India. However, since it's an internal matter we would choose to remain tight-lipped," said a senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on condition of anonymity.

"Although these are internal developments, but as India is our biggest neighbour, the political changes are bound to have ramifications not only in Bangladesh but in the entire South Asian region, particularly in the domain of foreign policy," said another senior foreign ministry official.

Officials at both the Prime

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Int'l flights to and from ZIA resume

By Staff Correspondent

International flights to and from Zia International Airport (ZIA) resumed yesterday afternoon following the end of the wildcat strike by the Indian Air Traffic Controllers.

The flights remained disrupted for nearly 24 hours.

The first flight that arrived at ZIA in the evening was from New York following the departures of the flights to Calcutta by Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

But the situation at the airport remained chaotic since the flight schedule was disrupted Friday morning. Only two flights, one from Calcutta and the other from Kuwait, could reach Dhaka on that day.

The departure lounge was crowded with waiting passengers. Hundreds of people also gathered of the arrival lounge to

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Yasmin murder: 2 more PWs cross-examined

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Apr 12: Hearing of the Yasmin rape and murder case resumed today in the district and sessions judge's court, Rangpur.

All the nine accused in the case who are facing trial under Section 201 (34) of the Penal Code were on the dock.

Two more prosecution witnesses were cross examined today in the court by the prosecution and defence counsels. During the hearing Kamrul alias Helal, a journalist of Dinajpur was declared hostile by

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BTC distributor robbed of Tk 10 lakh in city

By Staff Correspondent

A group of armed muggers looted over Tk 10 lakh from a company microbus at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

According to witnesses the microbus belonging to Asmah Ltd., a BTC distributor, was intercepted by a group of four bandits in front of Nibedita Nursing Home at Road No 7 of Dhanmondi. The money was being taken for depositing in a nearby bank.

The men fired several shots, broke the windshield of the vehicle with iron rods and forced the four employees out of the microbus. The company accountant, Rezaul, was shot in the hand while the driver and two other employees were severely beaten up.

Within minutes, the robbers boarded the microbus and drove off, towards Mirpur Road. A motorbike was seen going along with it.

The Director of Asmah Ltd., Towfiqul Hasan Topu, later told this correspondent that his staff were taking Tk 10.60 lakh to deposit with a bank at Kawan Bazar. He has filed a case with Dhanmondi thana.

Dhanmondi police said the microbus was recovered from near the Shia Mosque in Mohammadpur. Two men were being interrogated. Mohammadpur police said three suspects were also picked up in connection with a separate robbery.

Kenya post imposing total of 241

Sports Reporter

Kenya were reduced to 58 for three wickets. But Bangladesh's success ended at that point in the face of some excellent batting display from Steve Tikolo, who scored a masterly 147 off 152 balls.

The sturdy right-hander, who came into bat at his customary position of number four, whacked three huge sixes and fifteen hits across the rope to celebrate his first ton in the 22-nation meet.

Together with skipper Maurice Odumbe, who scored a workman-like 63-ball 43, Tikolo put on 138 runs for the fourth wicket to steer Kenya from the mire to a commanding position of 196 before the former fell seven runs short of a chancy half-century.

Tikolo started his innings quite cautiously and then grew in confidence to punish all the Bangladesh bowlers with an array of shots. The Kenyan run-

machine, after surviving a couple of close calls while on nervous nineties, virtually set the field afire once he reached the magical three-figure mark.

The swashbuckling innings of Tikolo finally came to an end when he was caught at deep off the bowling of Khaled Mahmud Sujon in the 48th over. But by that time Kenya were strongly placed at 230 for 6. Rafique, the most expensive among the Bangladesh bowlers, then stymied the late onslaught with two quick wickets to eventually finish with three for 40 runs in his six overs.

Earlier, Bangladesh had a sensational start when new-ball bowler Saiful Islam returned make-shift Kenyan opener and vice-captain Asif Karim for a duck in fifth ball of the innings. And when the right-arm seamer trapped one-down Otieno leg before the

See Page 12 Col 7

Govt firm to wipe out terrorism from campus: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government is determined to wipe out terrorism and irregularities from the campus to enhance the standard of education and re-establish the dignity of teachers, reports BSS.

"We are tooth and nail against the practice of giving arms to the students for achieving political and other selfish ends," Sheikh Hasina told a delegation of the Bangladesh Sikhak Samity Federation at the International Conference centre.

The Prime Minister pointed out that even when she was in the opposition she handed over books and khattas instead of arms to students.

Education Minister A H S K Sadique, Federation chairman Sheikh Mohammad Amanullah, secretary general Kazi Faruque Ahmed, president of

Bangladesh College Sikhak Samity Principal Zahurul Islam, secretary general of Bangladesh Madhyamik (secondary) Sikhak Samity Mohammad Selim Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Sarkari College Sikhak Samity Principal Ali Akbar Khan and secretary general of Bangladesh Sarkari College Sikhak Parishad Mohammad Toha also spoke on the occasion.

The Prime Minister urged the federation members to impart such education and wisdom to their pupils as they could shoulder the responsibility of running the nation in future.

"You have to prepare our new generation who could be able to face very courageously the challenges of the coming century which would be tough and competitive," she said.

While speaking on raising

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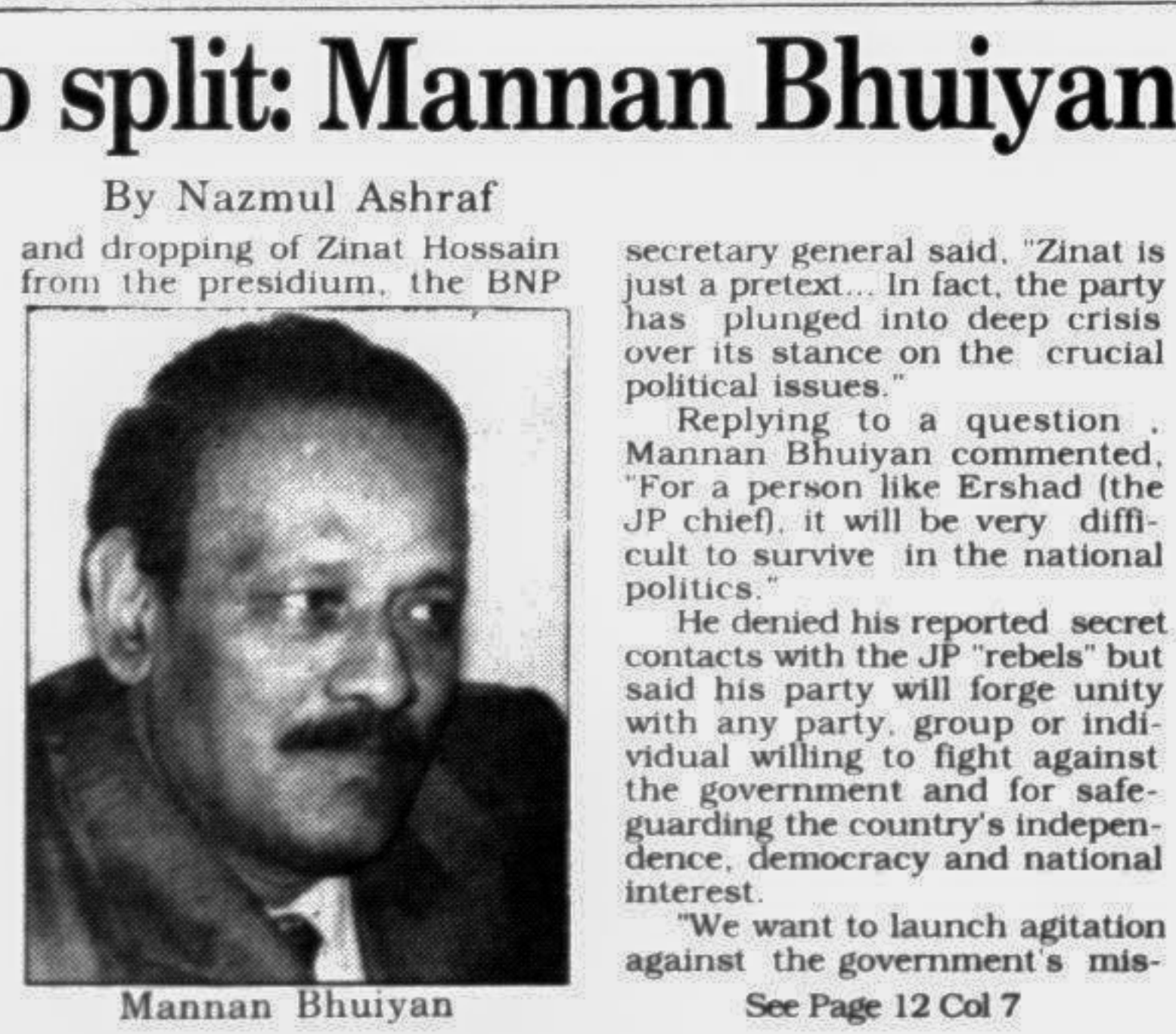
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Students of the Fine Arts Institute, Dhaka University taking preparations for a rally on Pahela Baishak.



Mannan Bhuiyan