

## 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 at Pallabi in the city Friday night.

The victims were identified as Jyotsna, 5, and Sharmin, 3, daughters of one Abul Kashiem, and Parul, 4, daughter of Abul Kalam. They were caught in the fire which razed through the slum at Baumabab, 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 Muharram Day.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed is likely to attend the main function of the day at Muharram 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 H S 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 areas 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, an industrial triangle can be conceived around the Bay of Bengal with Chittagong port at its apex," it said.

One side of the triangle will cover Calcutta, Madras.

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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 be-

cause 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 Bangladeshi 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 Naya Bazar city office at 10 am and later submit a memorandum to the DC of Dhaka, said a press release.

Meanwhile, the BNP has deferred 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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