



### Look for colour Rising Stars tomorrow

The first issue of our new-look "Rising Stars" is coming out in 4-colour, on Thursday, 8 May, 1997.

This 8-page tabloid-size "Rising Stars" will be full of fun and interesting cartoons, features, jokes, quiz etc and will be published every Thursday.

Make sure you get your copy of the "Rising Stars" on that date without fail.

— Editor

### Over 7 lakh to sit for HSC exams this year

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 7,22,215 students under the five education boards are going to appear in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations scheduled to start tomorrow.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Education told The Daily Star last night that the government had taken all necessary measures to ensure peaceful atmosphere during the examinations.

He said the government was taking 'extra precaution' following widespread allegations of leakage of question papers during the Secondary School Certificate examinations this year.

Denying rumours of leakage of HSC question papers, he advised the examinees not to be misled by such rumours.

The students will appear in the examination in about 750 centres in the five educational boards, officials said.

Of those appearing in the examinations, a total of 2,32,215

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### 2 BNP activists shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 6: Two young men were shot dead at Fatikchhari, 25 miles from here by some terrorists last night, police said.

The victims — Tofazzal, 25, and Azam, 23 — were identified by the BNP as its activists.

The BNP has blamed Awami League activists for the killings. The AL has denied the allegation.

Police said, the terrorists forcibly took them out of a hotel at Fatikchhari and fired on them.

None was arrested in this regard so far, police said.

### Ministries asked to clear arrear telephone bills

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTB) has sent notices to various ministries and departments to clear their arrears of Tk 127 crore by June 30.

The notices were issued on April 30.

An official of a ministry yesterday said, the arrears are difficult to be paid as there is no budgetary allocation to clear the bills.

Meanwhile, the BTB sent their bills for March to its subscribers on Monday, to be paid by Wednesday.

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## Electricity rates up by 5 pc from Mar 1

By Shehab Ahmed

The rates of electricity for all users except agricultural pumps have been raised by five per cent from March 1, according to an Energy Ministry notification.

This was the second hike in power tariff since October last when electricity rates went up by 10 per cent. The second rise was scheduled to be effective from December, last year.

The ministry's notification, yet to be made public, was circulated among different ministries and bodies on April 7.

The notification, however, did not say how the consumers would adjust their bills for March, which they have already paid.

The increase in electricity

charges was pressed by the Asian Development Bank which made it a condition for releasing the sixth energy sector loan.

The new rates are: Category A: Domestic — a) Up to 300 units Tk 1.85, b) 301 to 500 units Tk 3.00, c) 502 to 700 units Tk 4.05, d) Above 700 units Tk 5.25.

Category B: Agricultural pumps: Unchanged at previous rate of Tk 1.75 per unit.  
Category C: Small industries: a) Flat rate Tk 3.20, off-peak Tk 2.45, peak hour Tk 4.65.

Category D: Non-domestic (light and electricity) Tk 2.60.

Category E: Commercial flat rate Tk 4.65, off-peak Tk 3.00, peak-hour Tk 7.00.

Category F: Low tension

(general use 11 KV) flat rate Tk 3.00, off-peak Tk 2.40, peak-hour Tk 5.65.

Category G: High tension-DESA (132 KV) flat rate Tk 1.66.

Category H: High tension (general use 330 KV) a) Flat rate Tk 2.80, b) off-peak Tk 2.30, c) peak-hour Tk 5.40.

Category I: (Rural Electrification Board 33 KV) a) From PDB to REB Tk 1.59, b) DESA to REB Tk 1.66.

Category J: Street lights and WASA pumps Tk 3.05.

## Sporadic incidents mark hartal in Ctg Division

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 6: Normal life was almost paralysed in the 11 districts of Chittagong Division, today following a dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the BNP to protest 'government failure' in arresting the killers of two party activists in Feni.

The hartal was marked by sporadic crackers blasts and few incidents of violence, leaving at least five people injured, police and witnesses said.

Police said four persons were injured in a clash during hartal hours between two groups of supporters of BNP and Awami League at Boalkhali.

In Feni, a Sylhet-bound train from Chittagong was stopped by some unruly activists by pelting brick-bats while its driver was injured, police said.

Police and Railway officials said two local offices of Railway near Kadamtoli in the port city came under attack by some agitated processionists as some staff were working inside.

The attackers stormed into

the office by breaking open the doors and forced out the staff while some official documents were also burnt, police said.

Besides, there was exchange of brick-bats between two rival groups when a procession of BNP supporters was passing in front of Awami League office at Darul Fazal market during the hartal hours, police and witnesses said.

DIG of Chittagong Range Abdur Rahim Khan told this correspondent over telephone that no major incidents of violence had taken place today during the hartal hours.

Meanwhile, port officials said all operational activities inside Chittagong port came to a halt today to the hartal.

Offices, shopping arcades, markets and banks were mostly closed during the hartal hours.

The mills and factories at the industrial belts suffered production loss due to poor attendance of workers.

Officials said BDR and

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## Power crisis unlikely to ease before May 10

By Staff Correspondent

Energy Minister Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan yesterday said the power crisis is expected to ease significantly after May 10 when a key gas pipeline will be opened for gas supply to Chittagong.

Talking to UNB at his Secretariat office, he said the Ashu-ganj-Bakhrabad gas pipeline, which would carry surplus gas of Titus area to the Bakhrabad system, is likely to be inaugurated on Saturday.

This will augment gas supply to the Chittagong area enabling the 210 megawatt Razoan power plant to utilise its full capacity, adding 110-120 MW power to the national grid, he said.

By this time, the minister said, 210 MW electricity will be available from the fifth unit of Ashu-ganj power station that experienced an explosion in its current transformer (CT) on last Saturday.

The explosion had a 'snowball effect' on the total transmission network. That included a leak in the boiler pipe of the fifth unit of the power station which made it inoperative since then.

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## 'Rescheduling of bank loans should not be encouraged'

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria yesterday said rescheduling of bank loans has now become a 'camouflage for not repaying money to the banks.' "This is a kind of playing games and not a serious way of recovering stuck up loans," the finance minister said while exchanging views with the editors of national dailies and weeklies on the next annual budget at the state guest house Padma.

Commenting on a suggestion that rescheduling facilities should not be given more than once or twice, he said, "I fully agree on stopping such rescheduling practices."

Kibria said failure in business "can not be rewarded by branding them as sick industries."

He said some unscrupulous entrepreneurs exploit the government's incentives like tax holiday. After enjoying the facility for five years, they declare their industries 'sick' and set up another one to continue enjoying such incentives, he maintained.

Kibria admitted that the foreign aid disbursement situation was not "good" and said "Like

the previous years, disbursement of foreign aid is much less than the pledge."

Kibria claimed that he had succeeded in keeping the current expenditure within budgetary limits and that there would be three to four per cent growth in spending. He said the government had to face an 'unforeseen cost' of about Tk 400 crore as huge amount of savings certificates were encashed during the October-December period.

Supplementing the finance minister, finance secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan said the additional expenditure could be adjusted from the Tk 440 crore unexpended expenditure account. He also said the non-tax revenue collection faced contraction as receipts from debt servicing liability was lower from the Tk 1150 crore target.

Kibria said he wants to "rationalise" fertiliser price by "withdrawing the massive subsidy" from the item which is "straining" the country's exchequer. He pointed out that one tonne of urea was being produced at Tk 5100 using sub-

sidised gas and sold at Tk 3700. The same urea is imported at Tk 10,000 a ton. "This is difficult for the economy to bear."

Kibria said privatisation programme is going on smoothly in the textile sector and there is no major problems there. "We have already paid some workers to be axed," said he. "Eleven mills have been identified" and those one slated to be privatised next year.

"But we are facing major problems in the jute sector. We are facing drainage of resources in the sector. It is impossible to keep white elephants like the Adamjee Jute Mills. But this is also a sentimental issue. Should we come out of the jute sector totally? Should we not keep some mills even at some losses?"

The finance minister said there is an 'agreed decision' to prune the activities of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) since the government can not supervise such a huge establishment.

"It is difficult to run the banks with bureaucratic-minded people," he said.



Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the two-day national council of the party at the Outer Stadium in the city yesterday. —Star photo

## AL nat'l council begins

By Staff Correspondent

The two-day triennial national council of the ruling Awami League began in the capital yesterday amid great enthusiasm of the party councilors and delegates from across the country.

Party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the council at the Outer Stadium by hoisting the National Flag while the National Anthem was being played. She also released pigeons and balloons. She was given a warm welcome when she reached the venue.

Climbing on the podium, Hasina garlanded a big portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She herself conducted the opening session which started with recitations from the Holy Quran, the Geeta, the Bible and the Tripitak.

The Outer Stadium and its surrounding areas were colourfully decorated to hold the much-awaited council of the ruling party, the schedule for which was changed four times.

A huge pandal was erected over the whole playground with sitting arrangements for 10,000

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## Work hard to remove poverty, Hasina asks party men

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that the country would be freed from the curse of hunger, poverty and illiteracy by the year 2020.

"We have a mission, a goal and a dream in our march towards the 21st century. Let us translate the cherished dreams of the Father of the Nation into reality by this period," Hasina said while inaugurating the triennial national council of Awami League at the Outer Stadium in the city.

Spelling out her mission for building a 'Sonar Bangla' (golden Bengal) by the year 2020, she said, "the year 2020 will witness the birth of a new Bengalee nationhood." The nation will celebrate the centennial of the birth of Bangabandhu in the year 2020 in a country free from poverty, hunger and illiteracy, she said.

She called upon the leaders and workers of her party to work relentlessly for the people to accomplish the task through a socio-political movement uniting all irrespective of party profession, caste and eve.

Opening the council at 3:15 pm the AL chief made a 70-

minute written speech before a packed audience comprising AL leaders and workers, leaders of other political parties and invited guests including diplomats, intellectuals and elite of the city. Over 5000 party councilors and delegates and hundreds of grassroots level party leaders and workers attended the council.

Leaders of other parties who attended the inaugural session included Jatiya Party secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju, Kazi Aref Ahmed and Hasanul Haq Inu of JSD and Mujahidul Islam Selim, Ajay Roy and Syed Ali Akssad of CBP. None from BNP attended.

The AL chief described in detail the 'successes' of her 10-month-old government, and outlined the strategy for economic emancipation of the people and also spoke about struggle for democracy in the past and "conspiracies" against the interest of the country.

Referring to her party's major policy decisions taken in the last council and its election pledges, Sheikh Hasina called upon her party men to work hard to fulfil those. She gave special emphasis on prevention

of terrorism and maintenance of law and order, checking corruption and abuse of power, fight against communalism, mass awareness for spread of education, poverty-alleviation, empowerment of women and ensuring children rights, protection of human rights, speedy industrialisation and expansion of trade, and ensuring welfare of labourers.

She asked party workers to "honour peoples confidence reposed on the present government."

The party will have to work as a bridge between the people and the people's government," she said. In this regard, Hasina quoted Bangabandhu "it's easy to go to power but, tough to remain in power by working for the emancipation of people."

Turning to maintenance of law and order Sheikh Hasina said, "From this podium I call for formation of 'Gano Committee' (peoples' committee) at various levels with people representing all strata of life to maintain law and order." The government will consider recommendations of the Gano Committees with due importance.

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## Water from 5 out of 6 city pumps contained no disinfectant!

By Morshed Ali Khan

Random tests of tap water in six of the city's pump stations have revealed that only one station is supplying water which contains the chlorine necessary to ensure water quality. Department of Environment (DOE) sources said.

The tests were conducted recently by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research (ICDDR,B), Dhaka WASA and the DOE.

The tests were carried out on samples from 12 points under Baunani Pump Tubewells-3, 4 and 5; Pango Hospital WASA Pump; Shamoly Bashabo Pump and Shamoly Ring Road Pump Station. Six of the samples contained 'harmful bacteria,' the test report said.

According to the test report, water from all the pumps, except that of Banani Tubewell-5, contained no disinfectant whatsoever. Before releasing water for consumption, WASA must chlorinate it to make it drinkable. Tap water should have a maximum of 0.2 milligrams of chlorine per litre of water.

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## Bangabandhu murder case Proceedings stayed till June 10

By Staff Correspondent

The District and Sessions Judge's court, Dhaka, yesterday stayed the proceedings of the Bangabandhu murder case till June 10 in compliance with a High Court order earlier.

District and Sessions Judge Kazi Golam Rasul announced the stay order following a defence petition that the High Court in its May 4 order had stayed the proceedings of the case for four weeks.

The sitting of the court began at 11:50 am and ended at around 12:25 pm.

The lawyer of accused Begum Zobaïda Rashid, submitted before the court that a Division Bench of High Court in an order on May 4 had stayed the proceedings of the case for four weeks.

The Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman had passed the order upon a criminal revision petition of Zobaïda Rashid which challenged the charge framed against her by the District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka on April 7.

## Poverty, corruption threatens world peace: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday emphasised establishing peace and understanding all over the world to make it habitable for the future generations, reports BSS.

She was addressing a seminar on 'World Peace and Understanding' organised by Rotary Club of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

Begum Zia said the existence of the human civilisation is related to the continuation of peace.

Last for power, individual high ambition and fanaticism have caused war in different parts of the world which is snatching the lives of thousands of people, posing a threat to the human civilisation, she added.

Khaleda Zia said, "We are anxious at the apparent failure of the United Nations in restoring peace," but expressed the hope that the peace-loving people would be the ultimate winners.

She also described poverty, corruption and racism as threats to the world peace and emphasised alleviation of poverty.

Chaired by M Mosharaf Hossain, the seminar was also addressed by UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh David E. Lockwood and Shaïque Ahmed Bhuiyan.

## People are not satisfied with AL rule: Ershad

RANGPUR, May 6: Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad at a meeting here today said people are losing their confidence in the government and searching for an alternative, reports UNB.

"We had extended our unconditional support to the Awami League to form the government, but the people are not satisfied with its rule," he told the meeting held at Mithapukur College ground.

Ershad said "In the last general election people rejected the BNP for its five years of misrule and now they are looking for an alternative force. And that is Jatiya Party," he added.

The JP candidate from Mithapukur constituency was defeated in last bypolls as the ruling party supporters cap-

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## Govt, Opposition urged to use JS to resolve nat'l issues

Relations between Bangladesh and the United States of America (USA) are based on mutual respects, outgoing US ambassador David N. Merrill said yesterday at the luncheon hosted in his honour by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (Am-Cham), reports BSS.

Held at a local hotel the luncheon was attended by leading people in trade, commerce, industry, members of the Jatiya Sangad and newsmen besides members of the Am-Cham.

Am-Cham President Forrest E. Cookson presided over the function.

Ambassador Merrill recalled the visit of American First Lady Mrs Clinton in 1995 and the meetings between President Clinton and the former and the present prime ministers of Bangladesh in this regard.

Referring to his three year tenure the US envoy said the re-

lations between the two nations continued to strengthen, and 'I leave Bangladesh confident that our bilateral relations are deep, strong and broad-based.'

He hoped that the roots of democracy in Bangladesh can be further deepened.

While referring to the 1991 and 1996 elections, the US ambassador said, in each case, the opposition leader and her party joined parliament immediately after the polls, respecting the popular will, putting the country before party, and added to say "The June 1996 election saw a record 74 per cent turnout, with an 80 per cent among women voters which level of participation surpassed that of US elections by a large margin."

Merrill, however, stressed on the development of a political culture based on mutual respect between government and opposition "that effectively uses parliamentary institutions to debate and resolve national is-

## Biggest ever offensive against ULFA

GUWAHATI, May 6: Indian troops have launched their biggest ever offensive against tribal guerillas in the eastern state of Assam, army officials said today.

Indian soldiers laid siege to Kabri Anglong district where at

### Rao, 19 others indicted for bribery

NEW DELHI, May 5: Former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao was indicted in court Tuesday on charges of bribing four opposition lawmakers to vote for his government and defeat a no-confidence vote four years ago, reports AP.

The filing of criminal charges ended months of pre-trial hearings and cleared the way for the start of a trial. Judge Aft Bharihoke sum-

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## Lok Sabha told Millions of Bangladeshis live in India illegally

NEW DELHI, May 6: About 10 million foreigners, mostly from Bangladesh, are living illegally in India, the Interior Minister told Parliament today, reports AP.

Millions of Bangladeshis sneaked into India through the porous borders over the years, Inderjit Gupta, the interior minister said, according to Press Trust of India news agency. They abandoned their 'impoverished' country of 130 million, looking for jobs in neighbouring India.

Gupta said it is difficult to identify the foreigners. Few Indians have identity cards. India's population has crossed 950 million, according to government estimates.

Twenty years ago, the gov-

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