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Pay Commission to submit report next week

By Mizan Ali
 The Pay Commission will submit its report to the government by the end of next week, official sources said.
 According to the proposed pay scale, Tk 2000 has been suggested as basic pay for those government employees who now get Tk 900 as their basic.
 At the entry level of cadre services, a basic pay of Tk 5650 has been suggested instead of present Tk 2850, while for the highest grade Tk 18,000 has been suggested against the present basic pay of Tk 10,000.
 The government will require an additional amount of Tk 2000 crore to implement the proposed pay scale, the sources said.
 The Commission is learnt to have suggested a total freeze on See Page 12 Col 8

PM's directive Complete Pay Commission report soon

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave directives to complete the Pay Commission report within the shortest possible time, reports BSS.
 The directives of the Prime Minister came when M Mujibul Haq, Chairman of the Pay Commission called on Sheikh Hasina at her Secretariat office here in the afternoon.
 Mujibul Haq apprised the Prime Minister of the progress of preparing the report of the Pay Commission.

R&H staff threaten tougher programme

By Staff Correspondent
 The Roads and Highways Department Officers and Employees Unity Forum will go for a tougher action programme if their 11-point demand was not met within the deadline expiring this evening, said the forum leaders yesterday.
 At a rally in the city yesterday afternoon, a large number of engineers and employees of the R&H Department chanted slogans in support of their demands, including the reinstatement of the former chief See Page 12 Col 4

BNP protest rally today

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will hold a meeting in front of the party central office at 4 pm today protesting the harassment of Begum Zia's family members and withdrawal of police from her security force, reports UNB.
 The protest rally will be followed by a procession, said a press release.

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Comilla Polytech hostels attacked BCL leader killed, 80 rooms ransacked

COMILLA, June 4: A Chhatra League (BCL) leader was killed and 10 others were injured as armed outsiders allegedly backed by a rival student organisation attacked two hostels of Comilla Polytechnic Institute early today, reports UNB.
 Witnesses said the attackers, who swooped on Maynamati and Shahidullah hostels under cover of bomb blasts and gunshots, ransacked 80 rooms and set afire the offices of the two hostel supers.
 Angry students with the help of local people barricaded the Dhaka-Chittagong highway protesting the incident, disrupting traffic on the busy road for three hours from 11 am.
 The Institute authorities closed classes for six days and

declared mourning programmes on the days.
 The dead was identified as Abu Yusuf Khan, 21, a 3rd year student of Electrical Department of the institute and joint convener of BCL Maynamati hostel unit.
 Of the injured, Milton and Sachhu of 2nd year Electrical Department, Suman and Sharif of 3rd year Electrical, Jewel of 2nd year Power Department and Masum of 3rd year Civil Department were admitted to Sadar Hospital.
 Campus sources said a group of 25-30 youths equipped with bombs and firearms shot at three BCL leaders including the Institute's convener Rizvi, from outside the hostel at about 0030 am, but missed the target.

At one stage, the group swooped on the two hostels exploding about 50 bombs and firing at least 40 rounds of gunshots, the sources said.
 They then went round different rooms of the hostels, searching for BCL activists. They ransacked 50 rooms at Shahidullah hostel and 30 others at Maynamati. Offices of the two hostel supers also were set ablaze.
 In room number 309 of Maynamati hostel, they chopped Abu Yusuf Khan with *chapat* and later threw him to the ground from the second floor.
 Yusuf was rushed to Comilla Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Later, he was shifted to See Page 12 Col 6



A pile of garbage outside the dustbin on a road in Mugdapara in the city. —Star photo

Environment Day today

World Environment Day and the 25th founding anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world today, reports UNB.
 "For Life on Earth" is the theme of this year's observance of the day, chosen by the UNEP.
 President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.
 In his message, President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed said the whole world should join hands to protect the earth and its lives by reflecting the ethos of sustainable development.
 "Today, the whole world is beset with grave environmental problems resulting in ecological imbalance caused by greenhouse effect, climate change, global warming, sea level rise, ozone depletion and desertification."
 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message called upon the countrymen, irrespec-

US Embassy seizes 6 fake red passports

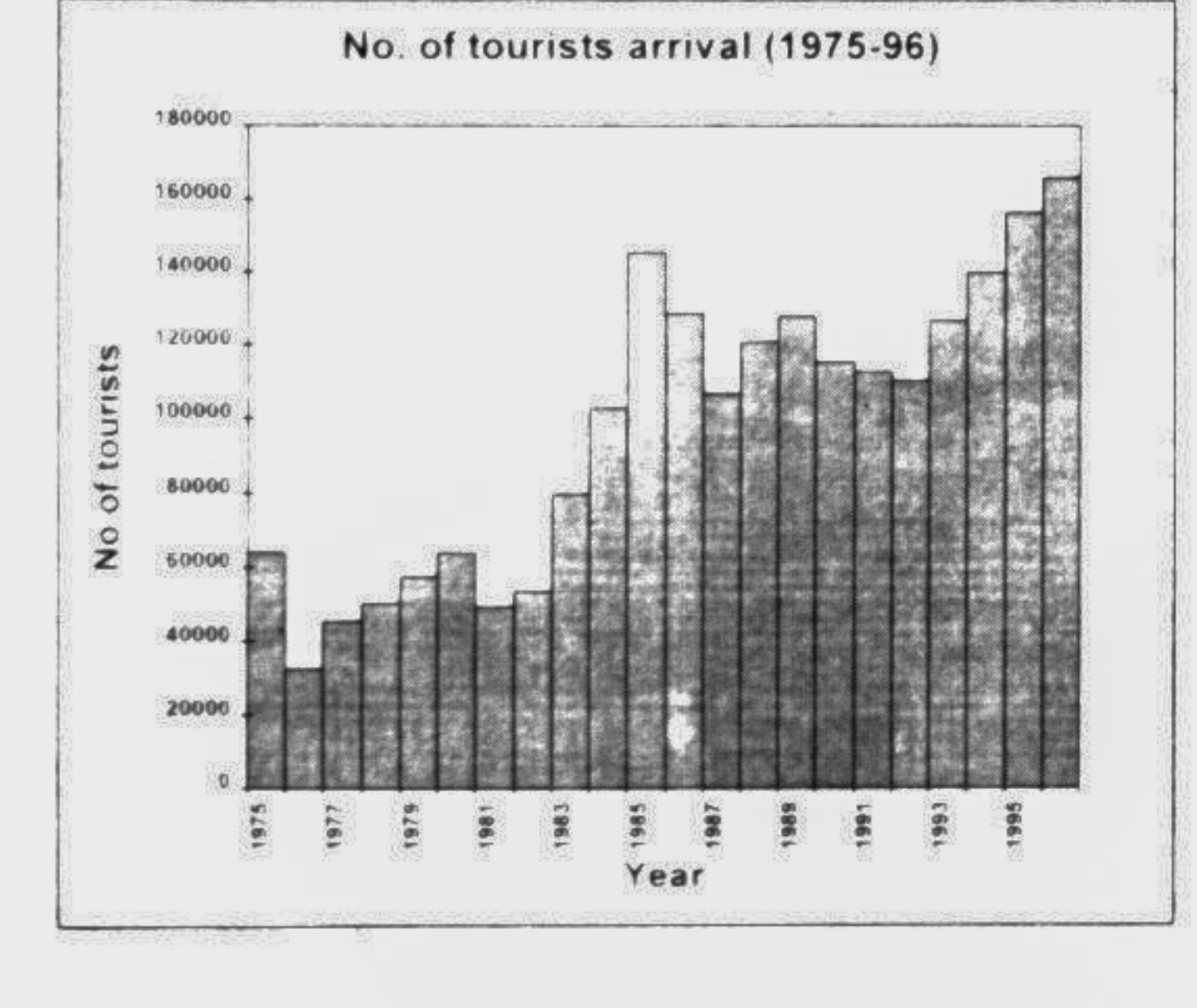
The consular section at the US embassy in Dhaka so far detected six diplomatic passports issued against fake wives and children of six members of parliament, reports UNB.
 The red passports were seized by the authorities concerned when they sought US visa or tried to leave Dhaka for the United States recently.
 The story was revealed by Chief Consular Officer David Dreher during a press briefing on the US immigration and visa policies at the embassy yesterday morning. USIS Director John Kinnannon was present.
 "However, the MPs concerned were not involved," Dreher said, adding that the MPs disowned the women and children against whom these diplomatic passports were issued.
 He said the US Embassy has taken up the matter with the Foreign Office here to look into it.
 Dreher showed one such diplomatic passport issued in the name of fake wife and children of an MP. He, however, did not disclose the names to protect privacy.
 He also showed several other forged passports issued against some members of a cultural group, who sought US visa to visit the country.
 Replying to a question, the Chief Consular Officer said some 35,000 people applied for non-immigration US visa last year. Of them, about 46 per cent got the visa.
 Dreher said roughly 25 per cent Bangladeshis did not return to their country after their stay in the United States. The figure is "very high" compared with other countries, he added.
 Explaining various reasons for not issuing visas to applicants, he said a visa official must be satisfied that the applicants would return after their stay in America.
 Sometimes, he said, documents and papers are not

Dreher showed one such See Page 12 Col 8

Flaws in policy, poor logistics hinder growth of tourism sector

By Naimul Haq
 Although the number of tourists is increasing, little has been done over the years for development of the two important tourist spots, Cox's Bazar and Rangamati. A total of 16,635 tourists visited Cox's Bazar and another 7,981 visited Rangamati last year, according to the BPC report.
 "Tourism in this country is still in its budding stage. Flaws in policy, coupled with indecision and poor allocation of fund are hindering development of the sector," a high official said while talking to The Daily Star.
 "Although political stability is a major factor for attracting tourists, there should have been more logistic support to boost the sector," said another official.
 Over one million tourists arrived in 1996, compared to just over 60,000 in 1975. Since 1992, there has been a steady growth in tourist arrival, according to a BPC report.
 Last year, the highest number of 53,007 tourists came from India, followed by UK-33,463, USA-11,033, Pakistan-7,070, Korea-6,017, Japan-5,716, China-4,016, Malaysia-3,927, Nepal-3,628 and The Netherlands-3,511.

Motels at Cox's Bazar, constructed before independence, now badly needs renovation, a high official said. The rooms and toilets are very old to match today's need. Motel Upal, which has 38 rooms facing the roaring sea, doesn't even have a proper reception room, he See Page 12 Col 1



Security force for Khaleda reduced

By Staff Correspondent
 The authorities yesterday reduced the size of the security force for Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia.
 Sources close to the opposition leader said that the number of security personnel was reduced to six from 18 yesterday afternoon. Begum Zia, also chief of the BNP, was enjoying security by an 18-member police team comprising plainclothes Special Branch police and uniformed police since she resigned from the office of the prime minister in March 1996.
 See Page 12 Col 7

Zafar, Moazzem expelled from Jatiya party

By Staff Correspondent
 Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad has expelled Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain and Shamim Al Mamun from the party with immediate effect, said a party press release yesterday.
 The action was taken for violation of party discipline, it added.
 Shah Moazzem, when contacted last night said, "Ershad does not have any right to take such action against us."
 Moazzem also said they had already called a council meeting of the JP on June 30 to decide the future course of action See Page 12 Col 2

Two DGFI men assaulted in Kawran Bazar

By Staff Correspondent
 Two DGFI personnel and two traffic constables were seriously injured as a group of young men allegedly led by Maj (retd) Sayeed Iskander assaulted them in Kawran Bazar area of the city yesterday.
 Police identified the injured as Naik Shahidul Islam and sepoy Md Ilias of the DGFI, intelligence branch of the armed forces, and traffic constables Abdul Qudus and Anwar Hossain. Ilias was under treatment at the CMH with serious wounds.
 See Page 12 Col 5

Policemen ransack eye hospital in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent
 KHULNA, June 4: The BNSB Eye Hospital in Khulna in the city has been closed for an indefinite period following an attack allegedly by the sepoy of the Armed Police Battalion (APBN) Tuesday evening in which at least eight persons were injured.
 The APBN members stormed the hospital creating panic See Page 12 Col 3

Lawyers manhandle magistrate for expelling HSC examinee

From Our Correspondent
 RAJSHAHI, June 4: A magistrate was allegedly manhandled and his chamber ransacked by some lawyers here this afternoon.
 According to sources, Ilias Bhuiyan, a first class magistrate expelled the wife of an advocate of the Rajshahi Bar, Rashiduzzaman, for adopting Shima died only five days See Page 12 Col 1

Bangkok to host 4-nation meet tomorrow Stage set for launching new economic bloc

By M Anwarul Haq
 Four countries bordering the Bay of Bengal are forming a new economic bloc to bolster trade and commerce and act as a bridge between the ASEAN and the SAARC countries.
 The organisation, initially comprising of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, is due to be launched formally this Friday at a meeting of deputy foreign ministers or senior representatives of the four countries in Bangkok, according to official sources.
 State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury will be representing Bangladesh while deputy ministers or senior government officials of the three other countries are likely to represent their respective governments at the formal

launching ceremony.
 Senior officials from the four countries began a two-day meeting yesterday in Bangkok to finalise the details of the proposed organisation.
 Talking to The Daily Star Abul Hasan Chowdhury said, the Bangladesh government has already approved the idea of the new organisation and the prepared the draft following consultations among the four countries.
 He said efforts taken by the government had led to the inclusion of Bangladesh in the new alliance. Chowdhury said the idea of the grouping was originally mooted by India, Sri Lanka and Thailand and was initially referred to as the 'Bay

of Bengal Economic Cooperation Organisation."
 Chowdhury said he was not sure if this name would be retained or a new name would be adopted at the launching following the end of deliberations at the level of secretaries in progress in Bangkok.
 He said that the alliance had been initiated considering the great potential of increasing trade volume within these countries by taking advantage of the geographical proximity of the participating nations in the Bay of Bengal region and also on the eastern coast of the Indian ocean.
 The state minister also informed that Myanmar has expressed its interest to join the See Page 12 Col 3

Talks to resolve Sectt impasse begin

By Staff Correspondent
 The authorities yesterday began talks with the leaders of agitating employees in the Secretariat in a bid to resolve the impasse over new office timing and their demand for early announcement of the Pay Commission report.
 Establishment Secretary Mahe Alam summoned leaders of six associations of Secretariat employees to meet him separately. Leaders of two associations talked to him yesterday. Leaders of four other associations are to meet him today, employees' sources said.
 Those who met the Establishment Secretary yesterday were Habibur Rahman, General Secretary of Personal Officers Association and Araj Ali, General Secretary of Class Four Employees Association.
 There are six associations of employees in the Secretariat, combined under an umbrella organisation, the Secretariat Sanjukta Karmachari Association.
 The employees continued their protests yesterday, holding rallies in the Secretariat, defying a ban on demonstra-

tions and staying off their desks for an hour from 10 am.
 They said they would continue their work stoppage for an hour until next week. It will be extended for two hours the week after.
 But their ranks were threatened with split yesterday when a section shouted at their leaders at a rally, accusing them of compromising with their demands. They particularly accused Habibur Rahman, President of Sachibalaya Sanjukta Karmachari Parishad.
 Habibur Rahman had a meeting with top officials of the Prime Minister's Office Tuesday evening.
 Trouble began when one section of employees shouted down Secretary General of Sanjukta Parishad Zafar Alam, demanding that Zafar Ahmed and Ataur Rahman, President and General Secretary respectively of the Secretariat Employees Association be allowed to address the rally.
 After a brief pandemonium supporters of Habibur Rahman and Shah Alam left in a pro-

New office timing to benefit people, says AL

By Staff Correspondent
 The ruling Awami League has hailed the new office timings and two-day weekly holiday announced by the government.
 Zillur Rahman, general secretary of AL, in a statement last night, said that the long cherished hopes and aspirations of the general masses were fulfilled with the recent government announcement.
 He hoped that the new office timings would inject enthusiasm in administration and fill the gap in the timing of the Secretariat and central offices with those in district and thana levels.
 See Page 12 Col 3

FBCCI hails new office timing

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the apex trade body, has welcomed the new office hours but with reservation about the salary-hike for government employees, reports UNB.
 In a meeting yesterday, the FBCCI Executive Committee hailed the new office timings from 9 am to 5 pm as those are consistent with the offices in *muassil* areas and other private and trade and commerce offices.
 About the two-day weekly holiday, the chamber viewed that it could be accepted if work in full swing for the five other days of the week could be ensured.
 However, it favoured half-day holiday on Saturdays for See Page 12 Col 4

Shima's death in 'safe custody' Probe by JS body stalled for lack of testimonies

By Reaz Ahmad
 The parliamentary committee formed to probe the mysterious death of garments worker Shima Chowdhury in Chittagong could make little headway due to non-availability of necessary testimonies, official sources said.
 The Jatiya Sangsad on February 18 constituted the 11-member committee headed by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad to investigate the death of Shima while in 'safe custody' in Chittagong Jail on February 7.
 Shima, 17, was picked up by police on suspicion of eloping with one Abdul Hafiz on October 8 last year and allegedly gang-raped by four police personnel inside Raozan thana on the following night. The girl's death when she was in 'safe custody' had sparked off a furor. Many human rights organisations raised their voices for proper investigation.
 Shima died only five days See Page 12 Col 4

after Hafizuddin, ASP of CID (Chittagong Zone), had submitted charge-sheet on alleged rape of the girl by four policemen. The four were arrested and sent to jail after a case was lodged against them.
 Kazi Shamsuzzaman, Joint Secretary (Committee) of the Jatiya Sangsad told The Daily Star yesterday that the parliamentary committee could complete its report if it would get the testimonies of Abdul Hafiz and Dr Mahbob of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).
 So far the parliamentary committee had four meetings, the last one on April 12, and paid a visit to Chittagong, said the official adding that Hafiz's whereabouts could not be known.
 Sources concerned said, police recently raided a house in Chittagong in search of Hafiz but could not find him. A See Page 12 Col 4

4 schoolboys kidnapped from Rangamati rescued

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, June 4: Four school students kidnapped from Rangamati town yesterday, were rescued by police this afternoon from Jaotola area in the city.
 During the rescue operation, DB police arrested one Abdus Salam, who allegedly belongs to an organised gang of child lifters, while the main kidnapper, Md Faruk, escaped.
 The rescued students were identified as Mostaque Hossain, 14, Ajar Ali, 15, Rabul Hossain Rani, 14, and Adnan Hossain Pasha, 14. All of them are students of class eight at the Rangamati Government High School.
 The 210 MW power plant today generated 150 MW. The plant was shut down due to a storm.

2 girls raped in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
 SYLHET, June 4: Two girls were allegedly raped in Sylhet town last night.
 One Rekha Rani, 23, while going to the South Surma area to catch a Moulvibazar-bound bus was caught by a gang of 5 criminals near the Keane bridge at about 9-30 pm. The culprits later gang-raped her. The victim herself immediately lodged a case with the Kotwali thana.
 Two hours later, another girl was raped near the Tarapur tea garden.
 Jahanara Begum, 15, along with her cousin, was on her way to Akhalia from the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital colony. When a gang of three stopped her baby-taxi See Page 12 Col 2

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