

Jail Killing Day today

The Jail Killing Day will be observed today commemorating the four national leaders killed inside the Dhaka Central Jail amidst a political whirlwind on this day in 1975, reports UNB.

The four leaders — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Capt Mansur Ali and AHM Kamruzzaman — played a significant role in organising the Liberation War of the country.

They were shot and killed in the dark of night by some unknown assailants at a time when a state of turbulence was created in the country through coup and counter-coup.

The government has recently started fresh inquiry into the killing side by side the

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Diploma engrs go on rampage, damage 20 vehicles in city

At least 20 vehicles were damaged when a group of people reportedly from a procession of the diploma engineers went on rampage near the Bangla Motor crossing in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said the trouble erupted when the procession was halted by police at the crossing at about 3 pm.

Police said more than 500 diploma engineers brought out the procession marching towards the Prime Minister's Office. The procession was brought out in protest against what they said, enactment of anti-people Chartered Engineers Act and setting up of an

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DCC demolition drive slows down due to lack of coordination

The Dhaka City Corporation's drive to dismantle illegally set up party offices has slowed down due to lack of coordination among different departments, with the first phase nearing its end.

DCC officials said during the three weeks since they started the operation, they dismantled 71 such structures in the city but had to spare many others as those were situated on lands belonging to PWD, WASA, Railway and other departments. The operation is to continue till November 5.

"Now we are making fresh charts with the help of our surveyors to detect these structures on our territory. As soon as the chart is completed, we will start the operation again," said an estate department official.

There are an estimated 300 such unauthorised structures in the city. Officials said the demolition team would have to go back to some of the places where they have already com-

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BNPPP meet resumes today

The adjourned meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party will be held at 7 pm today at Sangsad Bhawan, said a press release yesterday, reports UNB.

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(Top) BNP workers being chased by police after they brought out a procession at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday. (Below) Police fired tear gas shells to disperse the party workers. — Star photo

50 injured: 18 arrested Police, BNP activists clash in city again

Police used tear gas, water cannon and batons to prevent BNP supporters from staging a march on the city streets yesterday, triggering a clash that continued late into the evening, leaving at least 50 people injured.

Eighteen people were arrested after BNP supporters set on fire an auto rickshaw, a bus and a jeep at different places, damaged six vehicles at Jatrahari and another at Motijheel near T&T College, police said.

At least eight of the injured people were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. They included a policeman injured in cracker explosion. DMCH sources said.

Trouble broke out at 4-25 pm near the BNP central office after arrival of a top DMP official. He ordered BNP leaders including Zainal Abedin Farook, MP, not to march.

The BNP leaders said they would not go beyond Mouchak crossing and argued there was no prohibition on demonstrations. Some police officials agreed that they could march but the top official did not. Tear gas soon engulfed the area as police pressed ahead to disperse BNP supporters who had been gathering before the party office or coming there in processions.

Trouble also took place at Jatrahari and Gabtali where police stopped the processionists who retaliated with home-made bombs and smashing car and

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Evasion of duties in import of cars Ctg customs defy NBR order

By Shehab Ahmed with Nurul Alam in Chittagong

A nexus between certain officials and employees at the Chittagong Customs House has thwarted attempts by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to discipline officials allegedly involved in illegal import of reconditioned cars from Japan.

Customs sources said that the group, backed by a powerful lobby of car importers, is putting pressure on the NBR to withdraw orders for transfer of two officials — the Appraiser and his deputy — and disciplinary action against two others at the Customs House.

The NBR order directed the customs authorities in Chittagong to sift through papers of all vehicles cleared in the recent past and identify the people responsible for the irregularities and draw proceedings against them for departmental action.

The Appraiser who levied duties should be transferred to a less important post and replaced with efficient, experienced and revenue minded official, the order had said.

But the order was not carried out till Thursday, the sources said.

The nexus working under the banner of a 'coordination council' of officials and employees termed the October 6 NBR order a move to harass officials and employees who had been working hard to raise revenue collection.

But it ignored the major allegations against some of them that they were involved in an alleged racket between a section of customs and port officials and car importers.

They specialised in doctoring documents to show vehicles as less than five-year old and one or two-year old vehicles as five year olds, depriving the exchequer of huge levies.

This was the finding of an investigation earlier last month by top officials of NBR following reports in The Daily Star.

Following the investigation, the NBR decided to tighten restrictions on the import of reconditioned vehicles to help save the customers and the state from frauds.

It ordered that all reconditioned cars and luxury buses must undergo strict checks comparing their chassis number, serial number and code of manufacturing year with the 'Chassis Book', issued by the Motor Vehicle Association of Japan.

The swindlers based in Bangladesh, in collusion with unscrupulous elements in Dubai, have been doctoring the registration cancellation certificate to suit their purposes, making old vehicles qualify for entry into the country and the latest model cars as older ones.

The NBR order threatened their modus operandi as the

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Political parties for & against peace treaty becoming active

From Reaz Ahmed

KHAGRACHARI, Nov 2: As people in general, both settlers and tribals, eagerly awaiting a lasting peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), various political parties under the banner of separate forums are going ahead with their political programmes prior to the next round of talks between the government and the tribal leaders.

A while Nagorki Committee, a pro-Awami League forum, is organising public rallies in the three hill districts favouring the on going peace process. Sarbadalya Oikkya Parishad, a rival forum, is busy for launching a vigorous movement against the peace process.

District unit leader of BNP, Jatiyo Party and Jamaat-e-Islami got united under the banner of the Oikkya Parishad. They told newsmen here today that fresh movement programmes would be announced by BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleida Zia at a grand rally at Chittagong on November 11.

The 7th round of peace talks between the National Committee on CHT (NCCHT) and the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political apex body of the

Shantibahini, is scheduled for November 16.

Khagrachhari district unit leaders of the Oikkya Parishad said that following the November 11 'grand rally', a vigorous movement would be launched and similar rallies would be held in Feni and in Dhaka in quick succession.

Mr Shahjuddin, Convener of district J.P. Syed Abdul Momen, secretary general of district Jamaat and Prafullamoy Dutta, Secretary of district JCD — all leaders of the Oikkya Parishad — said one thing in common that none of them oppose the idea of a peace treaty.

"But in the name of peace, the government cannot give more rights and privileges to the tribal people," Shahjuddin said.

Talking to a group of jour-

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BNP, other parties call hartal in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Seven opposition parties including the BNP have jointly called a seven-hour (6 am-1 pm) hartal in the capital tomorrow to realise their demands for "making the parliament effective, ending government repression on Opposition and allowing street rallies and processions".

The parties will also organise demonstrations and torch processions at different wards of the city today.

The programme was announced by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, after a joint meeting of

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Diana was murdered?

LONDON, Nov 2: A British tabloid newspaper today printed "vital new evidence" which it said it had obtained that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been murdered in a commando-style "car bomb attack," reports AFP.

The people said explosives experts and police investigators believed a "deadly device" was fired from a car pursuing the Mercedes in which Diana and her companion Dodi Fayed were travelling.

The paper said two cars, a Fiat Uno and a Mercedes, had been speeding away from the tunnel in Paris in which the fatal crash happened on the night of August 30.

It added that a British secretary who gave evidence about the Fiat Uno's presence had

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Acid thrown on couple in Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Nov 2: A couple sustained serious burn injuries when unidentified miscreants threw acid on them at village Thakurchar in Matlab thana early today, reports UNB.

Police said the miscreants entered the house of Fakhrul Islam, 38, an employee of local Krishi Bank, at about 5 am and threw acid on Fakrul and his wife Nur Jahan, 30, as they were asleep with their only son.

Govt-Opposition standoff may be raised at donors' meet

By Inam Ahmed

Some of the bilateral donors are going to raise their concern at the Aid Group meeting on Tuesday over the political stand-off between the government and the main opposition party, leaving the parliament in limbo threatening the business and investment climate, diplomatic sources said.

The donors would ask the government to avoid confrontation with the Opposition and search for a peaceful solution to resolve the current impasse before it blossoms into a confrontation that had ravaged the economy between late 1994 and early 1996, the sources added.

"We would ask the government to resolve differences with the Opposition within the confines of the parliament and the constitution through dialogue," said a diplomat of a western donor country.

What the diplomats said is a repetition of the US Ambassador's last week's message to the key players in Bangladesh's political imbroglio, urging all sides to make parliament strong avoiding street confrontations and the culture of hartal but left the lion's share of initiatives upon the government to resolve the stand-off.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, Country Director of the World Bank (WB) Pierre Landell-Mills said Bangladesh has been able to overcome the crisis which was generated as a result of political instability

last year.

"Now we see the export picking up, good progress in legal reforms, establishment of a local government system, and also in managing the country's macro-economy," said Mills.

"The loss of foreign exchange reserve has been stopped, hopefully. The appointment of a dynamic private sector man in the Privatisation Board is also a particularly welcome sign. It is the credit of the chairman that the negotiations on privatisation are being done successfully. We are still cautious about the results of the change in the Board," he mentioned.

About the future course of action, Mills said, the government

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Bidding for 12 exploration blocks Some big cos being left out of negotiations

By Sharier Khan

Some high profile oil and gas companies like Mobil and Chevron-Texaco joint venture and a local company — BAPEX — appear to be left out of the ongoing negotiation process for awarding contracts for 12 hydrocarbon exploration blocks in the country.

The Second Round Block Bidding Negotiation Committee for oil and gas exploration late last week offered Block-9 to Pangaea, a small Canadian company which was registered only last year. Pangaea was the

lone bidder for Block-8 and its proposal was not backed by sufficient bank guarantee.

Sources said that Chevron-Texaco had not been invited to the negotiations. Instead, they were told by third party negotiators to contact a certain company for getting into a joint venture deal.

Earlier, the Committee had offered the most sought after Block-9, covering Narsingdi region, to a comparatively small British company, Tullow. Tullow

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JS session begins without BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sangsad (JS) went into its seventh session yesterday with Opposition BNP remaining outside the House.

Jamaat-e-Islami legislators joined the session but staged a walk-out in protest against what Jamaat MP Delwar Hossain Sayeed said the government's failure to live up to its pledge that 'the parliament will be centre of all national activities'.

Earlier, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury called upon "all the members of Parliament" to be present in the House for the sake of democratic system, and hoped that "all the MPs would contribute to flourish-

ing of democracy by attending the session."

Making indirect reference to the BNP's refusal to participate in a dialogue with the ruling party brokered by him, the Speaker said it was important in a democracy to create the culture of resolving any crisis through 'direct dialogue' between the Treasury and opposition benches. "To many, reluctance to participate in a dialogue tantamounts to ignoring democracy itself."

Later, Telecommunication Minister Mohammad Nasim, a key man from the government side to negotiate with the BNP,

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PM urges Opposition to join Parliament

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday made a fervent call for the Opposition to return to parliament and place all their demands in the House, reports UNB.

She was addressing a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party in the conference room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan in the afternoon, before the parliament went into its seventh session.

The Prime Minister said the government was striving hard to make the parliament effective and meaningful. "But some quarters are trying to make the parliament ineffective."

The government firmly believes that the countrymen would not tolerate anything which might render parliament ineffective or meaningless, she observed.

Hasina asked the ruling party MPs to highlight the government steps taken to make the parliament centre of all activities.

She pointed out that the Speaker had taken initiative to

arrange a meeting between the government and opposition, but the opposition did not respond to his invitation.

"It is unfortunate from the democratic point of view," the Prime Minister said, adding all sorts of problems could be solved through discussion.

She further mentioned that a minister had also taken initiative to bring the opposition back to the House. "But they (opposition) didn't turn up in the meeting," she said.

Hasina said the last-minute non-cooperation and absence of the opposition from the meeting seemed, to some extent, "politically motivated."

She called upon the party MPs to play spontaneous role for making the current parliament session lively.

Referring to the peace process of Chittagong Hill Tracts, she said the government was heading towards a solution to the long-standing problem.

The Prime Minister accused the previous governments of

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Bangabandhu Murder Case '19 army officers were involved in killings'

A prosecution witness yesterday named 19 army officers allegedly involved in the August 15 killings of whom Major Farooq and Major Rashid had frequent meetings before staging the carnage, reports UNB.

He said Major Syed Farooqur Rahman would frequently come to office of the then 2 Field Artillery CO Major Khandakar Abdul Rashid days before the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

"Farooq saheb used to come to his brother-in-law Major Rashid's office. But he frequently came in early August 1975," said the 35th prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, Subedar Major (retd) Anisul Haq Chowdhury.

Making deposition to the trial court he said the two majors had also come to the artillery unit together at about 10 pm on August 14, seven hours before the assassination of country's founding father Mujib.

The witness further told the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court that he one day in July 1975 saw Major Rashid Chowdhury, who once had been in the 2 Field Artillery and later dismissed, come to his CO's office.

"I have resigned and been enlisted in Director General Defence Purchase (DGDPA). Now I am trying for supply work," Major Rashid Chowdhury had told the Subedar Major while coming out of the office of CO Major Rashid.

The witness mentioned 19 military officers as killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, his family members and kins.

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USAID official in city

USAID Assistant Administrator for the Near East and Asia Kelly C. Kammerer arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day official visit, says an USIS special release.

Kammerer, who is in charge of all US government assistance programmes in this region, will lead the United States delegation to the Bangladesh Aid Group Meeting (AGM-97) of international donors to be held in Dhaka on November 4-5.

Kammerer will also visit various USAID-sponsored development programmes in Bangladesh.

Leader of PLA team calls on President, PM

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have a common perception in many international issues and reiterated Dhaka's policy of one China on the question of Taiwan and Tibet, reports UNB.

The President stated this while talking to the visiting leader of the Chinese PLA delegation, General Liu Jingsong, who made a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Welcoming General Jongsong, President Shahabuddin said since the establishment of diplomatic ties with China in 1976, mutual cooperation and relations between the two countries have increased.

He appreciated that China is assisting Bangladesh in her economic development and said "China is a partner of our economic development."

The President mentioned the

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4 bills placed in JS

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru introduced four bills in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

The bills are: The Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 1997, the Bangladesh (Whips) (Amendment) Bill, 1997, the Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 1997 and the Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1997.

All the four bills have been sent to the special committee for scrutiny.

The committee has been asked to submit its recommendations on the bills within seven days.

Ferry service at Teestamukh ghat resumes

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Nov 2: The railway ferry at Teestamukh ghat resumed its services from Balashi point today after the closure of Kalasona channel at Fulchari due to high siltation.

Last night, the ferry boat MV Suhurawardi while transferring passengers of Ekota Inter-city Express ran aground at Kalasona point on way to Fulchari. After returning to Bahadurabad the ferry boat

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Tk 3 lakh snatched in city

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of muggers robbed Tk three lakh from a staff of a business house on Elephant Road under Dhanmondi thana in the city yesterday.

Police said a gang of three youths riding a microbus intercepted the rickshaw of the staff of Alam Corporation on Elephant Road at about 10:30 am. Brandishing arms they snatched away the bag containing Tk three lakh in cash and drove off.

Police recovered the microbus in an abandoned condition from Malibagh area in the afternoon. However, none was arrested in connection with the incident till last night.