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PHILIPS

One burnt alive, 50 shops gutted

One person was burnt alive and 50 shops were gutted in two fire incidents in Pabna and Jamalpur on Saturday night, reports UNB.

A devastating fire gutted some 50 shops and injured ten people at Nandina bazar under Sadar thana of Jamalpur district.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from a cotton shop at the bazar and engulfed the area soon.

Fire fighting units from Sharishabari, Sherpur, Myensingh and Jamalpur rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after three hours.

Property worth over Tk one crore was destroyed by the fire, local people said.

In Pabna town, a young man was killed in a fire that broke out in a laundry shop.

The victim, Rafik Uddin, 30, was sleeping in his shop at a hawkers market in Pailanpur area when the shop caught fire.

Sources said an electric iron caused the fire as Rafik went to bed without switching it off.

Meanwhile, seven people, including a couple, of Diad-

hanghar area of Sirajganj town were hospitalised with burn injuries yesterday.

The condition of the couple were stated to be critical.

According to family sources, Johora Khatun, 19, doused her body with kerosene and set herself on fire following a quarrel with her husband, Kabir.

Kabir, a day-labourer, and five others also sustained burn injuries when they tried to save the woman.

Ice storm Bangladeshis in Canada safe

Canadians of Bangladeshi origin living in Montreal and Ottawa, the regions which were seriously affected by the recent ice storm and freezing rain, are safe, reports UNB.

Although 16 people died of Chilling cold due to power failure, no Bangladeshis were hurt or injured, said a press release of Bangladesh High Commission in Canada.

It said most of them had moved to their relatives and friends in the safe areas.

Acting Bangladesh High Commissioner to Canada Anwar-ul-Alam visited the members of Bangladesh community in the affected areas in Montreal and its adjoining areas on Thursday.

Power has been restored in most of the areas and the authorities lifted the state of emergency with the improvement of the situation, said the press release.

Three tribals kidnapped in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Jan 18: Three tribals, including two activists of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), were kidnapped last night by unidentified men from their residences under Sadar thana of the district, reports UNB.

They were identified as ex-chairman of Tilachhari Union Parishad Morod Chakma and his son Maja Chakma and Monobashi Chakma of Khaja Mijhori. Maja and Monobashi were reported to be activists of PCP.

PCP leaders at a press conference here today claimed that the kidnappers were non-tribals who opposes the CHT peace accord.

They urged the law enforcing agencies to rescue the kidnapped PCP members as early as possible.

The leaders also threatened to go for greater movement if their demands were not met.

Independence Cup

From page 1

tions, was stopped for half an hour due to bad light in the morning session. Four overs were curtailed when the umpires and the two captains decided to continue the match under floodlights.

Chasing a mind-boggling Pakistan total, India got off a flyer with their explosive opener Sachin Tendulkar and Saurav Ganguly extracting 71 runs off only 49 deliveries before the former departed for a whirlwind 26-ball 41 runs. His little cameo innings was studied with seven sweetly-timed fours and a massive sixer against off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq. The Bombay-born master blaster, who was adjudged played the tournament later, became the second Indian after his captain Mohammad Azharuddin to score more than 1000 runs against Pakistan.

After the departure of Tendulkar, caught at mid-off by Azhar Mahmood, Ganguly took over from where the right-hander had left off. Together with the makeshift one-day Robin Singh, the West Bengal hero produced 179 runs for the match-winning second wicket. Robin, who more than justified his promotion in the justified order, scored a run-a-ball 82, embellished a quartet of fours and two towering sixes.

But it was Ganguly who led the India's never-say-over mission with a scintillating 124, his second century in one-day cricket. The southpaw, an unanimous choice for both the player-of-the-final and most-valuable-player, struck eleven fours and an over boundary in his 139-ball vig at the crease. Playing under fading light that at one stage threatened a premature end of the match after both the umpires left the field in the 40th over, Ganguly got some small but very significant support from the lower middle order before being out in 43rd over, leaving his side 39 runs short of a memorable victory. But, thanks to the sport's noble spirit, Pakistan captain Rashid Latif showed his courage to continue the match with the lights on the streets already on and the ICC delegates all set to

give their verdict in favour of Pakistan, who were well ahead of their rivals in a possible 40-over match.

However, it was Pakistan who dominated the morning session after the Indian skipper won the toss and decided to field first. On a batsman-friendly wicket, Pakistan thrived on two tons after losing dashing opener Shahid Afridi (18) and out-of-form Aamir Sohail (17) with the scoreboard reading at 66 for two in 12 overs.

Left-handed opener Saeed Anwar hammered a brilliant 133-ball 140 and Ijaz Ahmed scored a dazzling 117 to shatter a 10-year-old third-wicket partnership record of Pakistan. Together the two shared a huge 230-run stand playing only 203 balls. The previous record of 206 was held by Moin-ul-Atiq and Ijaz Ahmed against Bangladesh in the third Asia Cup at Chittagong in 1988.

Anwar clobbered 15 fours and a couple of sixes for his 15th century in one-day cricket. The stylish left-hander, with a total of 315 runs, became the highest scorer in the tourney. He is now only two hundred shy of equalling the world record of former West Indies opener Desmond Haynes.

Ijaz finally returned to his aggressive self with a blistering 111-ball century, spiced with seven fours and a six. It was his seventh hundred.

In the ball-bashing last match of the tournament, bowlers were hammered mercilessly to all corners of the field. Saqlain, who claimed three wickets for 66 runs in 9.5 overs, became the highest wicket-taker with a bag of 13. For India, medium pacer Harvinder Singh took three wickets for 74 runs.

India won a cash award of 12000 dollars apart from the coveted Cup which was handed over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Pakistan, who won the second final to go level with India, were richer by 5000 dollars. Bangladesh, the other participants in the gala event, were eliminated in the league phase conceding successive defeats against the two former world champions.



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the party's Executive Committee meeting at her Minto Road official residence in the city yesterday.

Sramik League team calls on Hasina

A 20-member delegation of Sramik League, a front organisation of Awami League, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday to discuss the problems of the workers, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister gave them a patient hearing and assured that necessary measures would be taken to solve those.

Sramik League President Abdus Salam Khan and General Secretary Ahsanullah Master MP led the delegation.

Other members included Rehanuddin Rehan, Fazlul Haq Montu, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Abdul Main Master and Hasan Ali Chandu Sardar.

Anti-arsenic programme discussed

The fourth meeting of the National Steering Committee on Arsenic was held yesterday with Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed the anti-arsenic programme of the government and its progress.

It also discussed alternative source of arsenic-free drinking water in the country and treatment of arsenic patients.

The Health Minister urged the research officials to find out solution to the arsenic problems.

Committee members Health and Family Welfare Secretary Mohammad Ali, Water Resources Secretary Dr A T M Shamsul Huda were present in the meeting.

BGMEA polls

From page 1

the president from among its members.

"I will be trying to resolve the current duty refund issue under GSP scheme," Huq said. A 12.5 per cent duty rebate which the exporters and importers enjoyed under the GSP scheme will have to be paid by them due to cancellation of some 15,000 GSP certificates last year at the insistence of the EU.

Quddus claimed his team had been successful in reducing insurance premium by about 50 per cent and getting exempted from nationalised banks a one per cent (acceptance) charge on the import value of Letter of Credit. He also claimed credit for getting two bighas of land allotted from the government for constructing BGMEA's own building near Hotel Sonargaon in the city.

Quddus said he would also put on his agenda the issue of reopening of those closed factories.

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BNP dist units suggest

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spokesman Ehsanul Kabir told newsmen after the 11th. Begum Zia and party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also spoke on the occasion, he added.

No other central leader of the party addressed the meeting, convened with the main objective of "reading the pulse" of the district leaders on the crucial issue of BNP's boycott of parliament, insiders said.

The district leaders also demanded of the party chief to take stern action against anyone violating party discipline, Kabir said.

The demand came in the wake of 'rebel' lawmaker Akhtaruzzaman's recent letter to the party chief arguing for BNP's return to the House. The letter, copies of which were also distributed among all the party lawmakers, sparked off a stormy debate in the rank and file of the party, he said.

Winding up the discussion, Begum Zia told the meeting that another meeting of the NEC would be called after the coming Eid-ul-Fitr and the agitation programmes would be finalised in that meeting.

"Fresh agitation programmes would be decided in consultation with different opposition parties and catering to the need of the hour", she said.

Hung parliament

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The CPI-M played a key role in hurriedly forming a United Front coalition after the 1996 polls produced a split parliament, giving no party enough seats to take power on its own.

The United Front, made up of a dozen centrist, leftist and regional groups, eventually took power on June 1 with the legislative backing of the Congress Party.

However, the CPI-M refused to join the government and turned down request to head a ministry. The party's most prominent leader, Jyoti Basu, had been urged by other parties to become the prime minister.

Basu, in a rare public outburst, later called his party's decision a "historic blunder" since then, the hardline CPI-M has been divided between those favouring and those opposed to joining a new federal government.

Basu has been heading a coalition led by the CPI-M in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal since June 1977.

The CPI-M and three other leftist parties held around 50 seats in the 545 seat dissolved parliament. The four are expected to retain the strength in the new house.

PTI quoted Surjeet as saying that Basu would be the natural choice of the leftist block if the

seismic operations more than a year ago.

Even on last Wednesday, when Occidental's equipment truck was mobilising drilling tools from Moulabazar to Jalalabad, it ran over a child killing him on the spot. "Such accidents are unfortunate, but this is surprising that such accidents are always taking place with Occidental," noted a Petrobangla official.

Besides, Occidental is a very costly operator in Bangladesh. Sources said, the US company is now drilling a well in Bibiana under a separate PSC for Block 12 at a cost of 14 million US dollars. In contrast, British company Cairn Energy is drilling a well in Halda Valley, Chittagong at a cost of six million dollars.

Regarding delay of operations, Occidental officially blamed the government machinery like the customs, Petrobangla and the Energy Ministry. "If Cairn can achieve its targets with this government machinery, why can't Occidental achieve its own target?" a source commented regarding Occidental's complaint.

Occidental has a proven record of inefficiency and negligence in blocks 13 and 14. Beside the Magurchara blowout, at least five persons died during

7 cos allowed to install card phones

The government has decided to allow, in principle, the private sector to install card phones, a meeting of the Parliamentary Estimate Committee was told yesterday, reports BSS.

At present, the country has 1,400 card phones. So far, seven companies have been given permission to provide services to the telephone users, the meeting was told.

The meeting also reviewed budget allocation, revenue and income expenditure, development planning and progress of different projects of Bangladesh Postal Department and the Telegraph and Telephone Board.

It advised the authorities concerned to improve the quality of the postal services.

The meeting was held at the Sangsad Bhaban with committee chairman Dr Mizanul Haq in the chair.

Committee members ASM Firoz, Prof Abdul Quddus, Dr TIM Fazeel Rabbi, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed and Akhtaruzzaman attended the meeting. Secretary of the Telecommunications Ministry Mahbub Kabir and officials concerned were present.

The officials said the US government cordially welcomes any "sign of economic opening between India and Pakistan."

BSS from New Delhi adds: The Indian newspapers have also welcomed three-nation business summit which it said focused on issues related to regional economic cooperation.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's initiative in holding the summit clearly shows that she is keen on addressing the regional issues which have prevented development at a time when the global economy is undergoing rapid changes, prestigious daily 'The Hindu' said in an editorial published on Saturday.

It said Sheikh Hasina has rightly reminded the sub-continent of the immense strategic advantage to improve its share in the global trade.

The very idea of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) will be exciting if only the political leadership of the South Asian nations decides to work together to achieve this goal, the paper said.

In another editorial, 'The Observer' described the summit as 'unique' in more than one way.

Host Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has managed to bring two acrimonious neighbours, India and Pakistan, across the table to talk of a free trade area in the SAARC region by the year 2001, the paper said.

With Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral eager to cement ties with neighbours, the atmosphere at the Dhaka summit was reported to be congenial one, the paper said.

It was also the last opportunity to reinforce in practice the doctrine that bears his (Gujral) name, the paper added.

The government has cancelled the recruiting licence of MS Al-Azhar Tanaka Barkat International of 94, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue (2nd floor), Kawan Bazar, Dhaka and confiscated its deposit, reports UNB.

Revenue

From page 1

nanaging the deficit. Sales of savings instruments are high and these have a non-inflationary effect on the economy.

"But the government will have to pay high interests on the savings instruments," said a finance ministry source. "High sales of savings instruments will have a bearing on the next fiscal budget as the government will have to keep more provisions for repayment of interests."

Sundarbans

From page 1

The Forester said that wild animals were seen in the area several times in the last few months. "People do not realise how dangerous it is to walk inside the forest and we do not have enough manpower here to prevent them from doing so," said Shawkat Ali.

Shawkat explained how he procured the crocodiles. "I asked the local fishermen to give me the baby crocodiles if they net them. I have more than six crocodiles now and every other day the fishermen bring me one or two."

Shawkat said he did not get any government support to rear the animals. "I have to exchange things with fishermen and the local people to procure grass for the deer and fish for the crocodiles and the turtles," Shawkat said.

He said there was no proper toilet facilities for the visitors. "This place could be developed as one of the main tourist centres of the Sundarbans."

Clinton leaves open question of whether he met Paula Jones

WASHINGTON, Jan 18: Closeted in a 11th-floor conference room for nearly six hours, President Bill Clinton faced Paula Jones and, under oath, gave secret testimony in her sensational sexual harassment lawsuit, reports AP.

The president did not rule out ever being introduced to Mrs Jones, but testified that he did not recall meeting her before and, according to one source familiar with Clinton's unprecedented deposition, denied her claim that he exposed himself to her in 1991 and asked for oral sex.

Clinton's limousine emerged from an underground parking garage at his lawyer's offices six hours after he arrived and claimed the infamous distinction of first American president to testify as a defendant in any criminal or civil suit.

At the White House, he waved and, ignoring reporters' questions, ducked inside to pick up a draft of his State of the Union address. He cancelled plans for a dinner out and shared a private dinner in the residence with Hillary Rodham Clinton. "It's been a long day," one aide said.

Mrs Jones, who had been besieged by news cameras earlier, also left through the garage without comment. At her hotel, she ignored swarming reporters and was only heard murmuring to her husband Stephen: "Great. There's the elevator."

She answered questions under oath for 13 hours over two days last fall.

There was no official word on the substance of Clinton's testimony and lawyers on both

sides insisted they would abide by US District Judge Susan Webber Wright's gag order. Sources spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

While Clinton cannot be compelled to testify at trial, either side can enter his videotaped deposition into the court record. Until then, his testimony was to remain under seal.

A source familiar with Clinton's preparation for the session said in advance that the president did not recall anything about Mrs Jones and barely remembered anything about the May 1991 conference at which the incident allegedly occurred. Such accounts of his testimony were consistent with earlier public assertions that Clinton had no recollection of Mrs Jones or any alleged encounter.

In a dark business suit and accompanied by lawyer Robert Bennett, Clinton was whisked by motorcade the 1 1/2 blocks between the White House and Bennett's law offices.

7 hurt as dock workers clash at Mongla Port

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 18: Seven persons were injured in a clash between two groups of dock labourers at Mongla Port Saturday night.

Police said the clash took place over appointment of some dock workers in a wheat carrying foreign vessel.

Garments shop looted at N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 18: Snatchers took away Taka 15,700 from a garments shop at Deobhog Suhrawardy Market in the town last night, reports BSS.

According to police sources, two snatchers equipped with a pistol attacked Amin Garments shop in the market and snatched away the money from cash counter.

They also hit one Mirza Jahangir, 35, in the shop with pistol butt and left the shop after firing blank shots, police said.

About three hundred businessmen of the market brought out a procession protesting the incident and filed a case with Narayanganj police.

No one has been arrested.

PM, ministers

From page 1

LGRD and Cooperatives Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, State Minister for Textile K M Jahangir, high civil and military officials, international cricket personalities also witnessed the nerve-racking final.

The prime minister handed over the Cup to the re-appointed Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin, who paid high tribute to his team-mates for their elegant performance in the record-scoring encounter.

The prime minister, earlier on arrival at the National Stadium, was received by State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader and President of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

The senior officials of the International Cricket Council (ICC) were introduced to the Prime Minister by the BCB President.

NOTICE

It is hereby notified for general information that on the occasion of ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr special arrangement for ferry movement has been made at 2nd Dhaleswari Ferry ghat on Dhaka-Khulna Highway, Tulsikhali & Maricha Ferry ghats on Jinjira-Keraniganj-Dohar Road and Mukhtarpur Ferry ghat on Fatulla-Munshigonj-Louhajang Road for the convenience of general public. Ferry movement will remain suspended only for 2 (two) hours on Eid day for Namaz. Passengers are specially requested to get down from their transports at the time of loading on & unloading from the ferry of the transports.

Besides, the general public are specially requested to cooperate with the Ferry staff on duty & maintain discipline at the time of getting on & getting down from the ferry.

Md. Habibur Rahman
Executive Engineer (R&H)
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DFP-716/13/1
G-95

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net