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PHILIPS



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanging greetings with foreign diplomats at Ganobhaban on the Eid day. — Star photo

Five killed, 25 hurt in road accidents

At least five persons were killed and 25 others injured in road accidents in Dhaka, Chittagong and Manikganj during last four days, report agencies.

UNB adds: Four people, including a superintendent of police, were injured in a road accident in the city's Motijheel commercial area yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a microbus of the Special Branch collided with a private car near Shilpa Bank Bhaban at about 5:30 pm.

The injured SP of Special Branch, M Abdus Sattar Khan, 50, was admitted to Combined Military Hospital. His condition was stated to be critical.

Microbus driver constable Akkel Ali, 40, was admitted to Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

Police said SP Sattar Khan is investigating the January 28 firing incident at the Prime Minister's Office.

Two passengers of the car — Shamsul Haq Akhand, 40, and Nasima Yasmin Swapna, 30 — were also injured in the accident. Its driver fled the scene immediately after the accident.

A case was filed with Motijheel thana in this connection. Police seized the private car.

In Chittagong, three persons were killed in a road accident when a speeding bus collided head-on with an autorickshaw at Nandankanan in the city just before the Eid congregation, according to BSS.

Two passengers of the autorickshaw and its driver died on the spot, while the driver of the bus speed away.

The dead were identified as Ayub Ali, Abdus Sattar and driver, Juru Miah.

Two young men were killed and 20 others injured, 10 of them seriously, in a road accident near Manikganj bus stand on Dhaka-Aricha Highway on Thursday morning.

Police and hospital sources said, the accident occurred at about 11 am when an Aricha-bound minibus belonging to 'Jatri Seba' service collided head-on with a loaded truck coming from opposite direction. One unidentified young man age about 30 died on the spot.

The injured were rushed to Manikganj General Hospital where Mohammad Idris Ali, 35, a resident of Arpara of Al-fadanga thana under Faridpur district succumbed to his injuries.

Ten persons were admitted to the hospital and 10 others released after first aid.



Dr Wazed Mia, husband of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, exchanging Eid greetings with Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at the latter's Minto Road official residence on the Eid day. — Star photo

Taka devalued

From page 1

hours due to the recent turmoil in South East Asian economies that sent their currencies in a downward spiral against the dollar.

The BB sources said the readjustment also aimed at spurring remittances from the Bangladeshis working abroad, who send home about one billion dollars annually.

The reserve stood at 1.66 billion dollars at the end of December, which is barely enough to meet three months of imports. The reserve dwindled to the current level from its peak at 3.4 billion in April, 1995.

Meanwhile, the devaluation received a welcome response from the business leaders. Ms Laila Rahman Kabir, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said taka's downward readjustment against dollar was on the right track.

But the massive devaluation within a short period was not expected because the country imported huge raw materials for its industrial production, she told The Daily Star last night.

The MCCI president said it would make the price of machinery and raw materials costlier. "But we needed the devaluation since some East Asian countries devalued their currencies, sharply, which casts a shadow on export of Bangladesh's garments, shrimp and other products," she added.

Rashed Maksud Khan, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) called for striking a balance be-

tween exports and imports so that the devaluation could not harm the economy.

He argued that making the taka cheaper was necessary to resist dumping of cheap imports from Indonesia or Thailand. "Dumping of cement, and other products might affect our local industries," Khan said.

The DCCI president said leaders of major chamber bodies including the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry had a meeting with the Finance Minister on Wednesday where they discussed about current economic situation in the country.

But the devaluation could not yet make the garment exporters fully satisfied. "We have demanded that the government re-fix the value of one dollar at Tk 50," said Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association vice-president Nurul Huq Sikder.

Sikder told The Daily Star last night that lowering the value of taka would not benefit them. "It will only help us to maintain competitiveness of our products in the international market."

45 injured in Narsingdi incidents

From Our Correspondent

NARSINGDI, Feb 1: At least 45 persons were injured, three of them seriously, in two separate incidents in Raipura thana of the district on Friday and Saturday.

Ten persons were injured when a gang of 20 extortionists attacked the houses of Habibur Rahman, Anul Haq and Tamizuddin in village Amirganj at around 11 am on Friday, witnesses said.

The gang equipped with arms attacked the three houses after the Eid congregation and looted valuables.

Sahara Khatun, 65, Monzur Hossain, 32, and Aisha, 19, received bullet injuries when they tried to resist the extortionists.

They were rushed to the Raipura Thana Health Complex. Seven other persons were treated at a local clinic.

Police, however, could not be contacted for further development on the matter.

In another incident, 35 persons, including six women were injured when two rival groups of people clashed at Darigao village in Nilakha union under Raipura thana Saturday.

The clash erupted when about 200 people led by one Shahid member attacked the houses of Felu Mia and Shaheed Mia as they refused to supply water to Shahid member from their power pumps on credit.

The injured were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital. A case was lodged with the Raipura thana in this connection.

4 injured in clash in Cox's Bazar jail

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COX'S BAZAR, Feb 1: Three prisoners and a warden were injured in a clash in the district jail as a group of prisoners demonstrated demanding adequate food on Eid day, reports UNB.

Jail officials said some prisoners reportedly belonging to Mujahid Bahini staged the demonstration after the inmates were provided with 55 kg of fish and 55 kg of meat.

Mohsin Jute Mills closed sine die

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 1: Mohsin Jute Mills has been declared closed sine die from tomorrow.

The authorities issued the closure notice on January 29 amid continued violence by mill workers led by ruling-party-backed CBA leaders demanding advance money against Wages Commission award.

When contacted, the general manager of the mills said the workers gheraoed mills on the morning of January 26 and confined the officials in their respective office rooms demanding advance money of Tk 1000 for permanent and Tk 500 for temporary workers. They caused extensive damage to different offices of the mills.

On January 27, the workers led by CBA president and Sramik League leader Shahidullah Khan stormed into the mills and ransacked offices in presence of police, he added.

Earlier, the Jute Spinners Limited, a private jute yarn mills, was closed sine die following violence by workers demanding advance money against the new Wages Commission award.

Eid celebrated

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Academy and the Shishu Academy arranged discussion meetings focusing on the significance of the day.

Children's reunions and charity football matches were also organised in different parts of the country.

District and thana administrations also organised programmes in conformity with the national level programmes.

Bangladesh missions abroad also arranged programmes to celebrate the Eid.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television put some special programmes on the Eid day and the day after.

Leading newspapers brought out Eid supplements on Wednesday.

Bodies of two Bangladeshis found near Jakiganj border

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 1: Bodies of two Bangladesh nationals were found floating in the river Kushiara near village Nathpara near Jakiganj border today.

Badshah Miah, 41 and Mainul Maqum, 25, both from village Narshingapur of Kholachara union of Jakiganj thana had been missing since Wednesday last, family sources informed.

The bodies bore marks of injuries and sources claimed that the victims had been killed by some Indian nationals across the border.

Jakiganj police could not provide any further details. The bodies would be sent to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College tomorrow for post-mortem and a case of unnatural death had been registered.

Saraswati puja celebrated

Hindu community yesterday celebrated Saraswati puja with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports UNB.

On the holy occasion, offerings were made by Hindu devotees to Devi Saraswati, the goddess of learning and knowledge.

The puja was organised by different socio-cultural and religious organisations and educational institutions as well as in households with due religious festivity.

The main puja congregations in the city were held at Jagannath Hall of the Dhaka University, Ramkrishna Mission and Motijheel Bank Colony.

Bangladesh Secretariat Government Employees' Puja Celebration and Welfare Committee set up a 'Puja Mandap' at Muktagang on the eastern side of the secretariat to celebrate the puja.

Rajiv murder

From page 1

Amethi, a family feudom.

"I have unflinching love and affection for the people of Amethi. My family shall always be grateful to you," she said.

"I am aware my decision not to fight elections from Amethi has disappointed you," she said.

The district of Amethi, some 750 kilometres southeast of New Delhi is a rural constituency of about 1.2 million voters. Rajiv Gandhi was elected from Amethi in four elections.

Sonia Gandhi flayed the dominant Hindu nationalists, who are widely tipped to top the upcoming polls but fall short of a clear majority, and recalled the role of their Hindu allies in the 1992 raising of a historic mosque which fuelled communal violence and left some 2,000 people dead.

"People will never accept those who pull down religious structures," she said to prolonged applause. "Only Congress can deliver the goods. Only Congress can give a government representative of all people."

"The coming elections are a big challenge...on the one side are separatist tendencies...on the other is India's future."

Jamuna Prasad Shukla, a former Congress legislator, said Satish Sharma, the Congress candidate in Amethi and a personal choice of Sonia Gandhi, would win easily.

"Satish will win not because the people of Amethi want him to represent them in parliament, but because voters here want to keep it for Sonia Gandhi."

"If the Congress were to get a majority in this election, Sonia Gandhi will be prime minister in which case Satish Sharma will have to resign from parliament to enable her to fight elections from here."

Spl police

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For an effective coordination, they have planned a complete computerisation connected through the Local Area Network (LAN).

The Home Ministry is already examining a Tk 2.5 crore project proposal from the police headquarters in this regard.

Dhaka and Chittagong will get priority with as many as six inspectors each. The rest five ranges will get three each. Inspectors and officers senior to them will make up half of the total manpower in each cell, according to the proposal.

The move was taken following a Finance Ministry proposal last year when charges of massive manipulation were made against stock market operators.

Police officials said the ECC network will also help the special units dealing with trafficking of women and children.

Filmfare Award

Shah Rukh, Madhuri best actor, actress

MUMBAI, Feb 1: 'Dill to Pagal Hai' directed by Yash Chopra bagged the best film award at the 43rd annual Filmfare Award at Gurgaon in north east Mumbai here tonight, reports PTI.

The director of 'Border' J P Dutta bagged the best director award. Shah Rukh Khan was declared the best actor while Madhuri Dixit received the best actress award.

Sharmila Tagore received the lifetime achievement award while Rishi Kapoor received a special award for completing 25 years as a legendary man on the silver screen.

Jaya Bachchan also received a special Filmfare award for her contribution to the cinema.

Mahima Chaudhari, who made her entry into Bollywood with Subhash Ghai's 'Pardes', received best debutante award while best debutant award was bagged by Akshay Khanna for 'Humayunpur'.

Hita Singh received the best music director award for the film 'Dil to Pagal Hai'.

Gunshot at PMO

From page 1

Malek, called the incident of 'firing' on the Prime Minister's office "an act of cowardice" and said that many factors may have worked behind it.

"I can't perceive the exact motive, but there may be a lot of factors that prompted the incident," he told UNB over phone.

Dr Malek said, "As you know, we are in the midst of confrontational politics... Since I am holding a political post and discharging certain duties given by the Prime Minister, some people may not like me, they may have aggressive designs against me as I don't know how to compromise."

Replying to a question, he said he could not guess who might have done it, but added that it was not the act by any aggrieved person from his own party, Awami League.

"May be they are from business people, services or opposition political camp, not happy with my sincerity and honesty," the PM's political advisor said, agreeing that they might have done it to scare him and force him to do something.

Dr Malek put forward several possibilities behind the January 28 firing, saying it might have a link with the CHT issue since he had worked from behind-the-scenes to resolve the problem or might be linked with the killers facing trial in Bangabandhu Murder Case.

He also did not rule out a link with the opposition's design to create law and order situation or with 'terrorist activities' the opposition has threatened to start after the Eid-ul-Fitr. He said, "The incident may be a prelude."

Holiday mood

From page 1

nearly nine million population of the capital was thought to have left the city to enjoy the greatest festival of the Muslims with their families scattered over the country.

Movement of vehicles, specially rickshaws, on roads were much less yesterday than any usual weekday, offering the city dwellers another jam-free day.

Most city markets and shops, which witnessed a mad rush of last-minute shopping by thousands of people till midnight before Eid day, remained closed for the last three days.

However, an official said that a good number of businessmen yesterday came to the banks adjacent to the markets to deposit cash, the sale proceeds from the last day's Eid shopping by people.

Stock prices at Dhaka Stock Exchange also marked a 2.21 per cent rise in the index when the bourse resumed transaction after the Eid yesterday.

300 LTTE men

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and rebels have been reported killed or wounded in the fighting since then.

The highway would give the military land access to Jaffna, where all troops and supplies have currently to be transported by air or sea.

LTTE rebels have been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east since 1983. The government spokesman says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, but LTTE put the toll higher.

Pet shops

From page 1

bears in the past, and there would not be any problem regarding obtaining papers to keep the bear.

One can buy a langur caught from Sylhet for Tk 2,000, a large civet for Tk 2,500, a bear for Tk 30,000, a baby jackal for Tk 500 or a one-foot long baby crocodile for only Tk 500.

The Katabon traders said they had 'parties' all over the country who, on order, procured the animals. "We can even give you a permission to keep these animals in your possession," said one.

When asked whether he could help smuggle out animals, he replied in the affirmative and said, "no problem, so many birds and animals are being smuggled out."

Minister for Environment Sajeda Chowdhury told The Daily Star that lack of manpower of the Forest Department is affecting the monitoring of wildlife trade.

She said a plan has been chalked out to increase field-level manpower of the department which will be soon placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

"We already have an application for permission to export lizard skin," said Chowdhury. "We have not yet given any permission to the applicant because we want to verify on the spot whether lizards are really being reared and bred."

Young man

From page 1

nection by the victim's mother. One person was arrested in connection with the murder.

Meanwhile, Lalbagh police recovered a body of a fish trader identified as Abdul Malek from Itwala ghat of Islambagh yesterday afternoon.

Police said the fish trader was missing since yesterday midnight. His wife, Shima had filed a case earlier.

743 Shantibahinimen

From page 1

Dudukhara, their transit headquarters, in the afternoon under heavy security.

Earlier on January 28, field commander of Shantibahini Ushatan Talukdar, in a letter to Liaison Committee Convenor Hansadhar Chakma requested 'security escort' for the top PCJSS leader from Dudukhara to Khagrachhari.

Ushatan Talukdar had also requested for details about the surrender ceremony at Khagrachhari Stadium on February 10. He also sought details on resettlement of the Shantibahini cadres in their homes.

"We are making the requests on these matters so that the PCJSS could give its opinion at the necessary moment," Talukdar said.

BSS adds from Khagrachhari: Security measures have been strengthened in the district for the February 10 arms surrender, officials said here yesterday.

The deputy commissioner of Khagrachhari told this correspondent that the members of Shantibahini will stay in the 'samabesh' camps set up for them from February 8. Later the Shantibahini members will be taken to the transit camp at Khagrachhari sadar under heavy security by the Army and BDR.

The district administration is holding meeting with different departments concerned everyday to ensure coordination in this regard. Minister without portfolio Kalparanjan Chakma is supervising various activities for the February 10 arms surrender.

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