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Let's make things better PHILIPS

PM tells foreign chamber team

CHT a new area for massive investment

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the restoration of peace in Chittagong Hill Tracts has created a scope for massive investment by local and foreign investors, reports UNB.

"A new area of trade and investment has been opened up following the establishment of peace and stability in the CHT region," she told a 10-member delegation of Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Foreign Chamber).

The newly elected Executive Committee of FC, led by its President AKM Shamsuddin, called on the Prime Minister at her Sangsad Bhaban office and discussed with her issues relat-

ing to business and investment. The Prime Minister said her government has been encouraging the private entrepreneurs for playing an effective role in the economic development of this area. She said a special cell has been opened in the Ministry of Planning for the speedy development of the region.

Responding to the problem of power supply raised by the business leaders, she said private sector has been allowed to the problem of this sector.

"We have plans and programmes and we are trying to implement those on the basic of proper policies for rapid eco-nomic growth," she said calling upon them to increase export items for the expansion of ex-

The Foreign Chamber leaders congratulated the Prime Minister for her success in signing the CHT peace agreement.

They also appreciated the establishment of one-stop service cell of BOI.

The delegation included vice-president of the Foreign Chamber Hugh E Tweed, secretary Jahangir Bin Alam, Masih Ul Karim, NSJ Miller, ABA Siraj Uddowlah, Jhon LW Noal, Chan Kuk Han, David T Humphreys and Mahbubul



Dhaka Nandonik staged a drama at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday as part of the Amar Ekushey programme organised by Sammilita Sangskritik Jote. Star photo

Hasibur's membership

the court. Another professor of law of the university, Dr Mizanur Rahman, said Swapan's case can't be considered as an act of floor-crossing so far Article 70 is concerned as he has neither resigned from the party nor he has any scope to vote against it. There is no clear provision in the Constitution regarding the status of an MP after being expelled from his party, he said. "Swapan is going to get the advantage, of the lapses in the law." Dr Rahman said adding, the spirit of the law is to stop change of party by an MP.

Asked about the status of Swapan's membership of the parliament, former Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad and now a BNP lawmaker, Shaikh Razzak Ali, told The Daily Star, "If there is any violation of Article 70 of the Constitution in future. in this regard, the BNP will bring it to the notice of the Speaker who, according to law, will communicate the issue to the Election Commission." But he declined to comment on the fate of JS membership of his

Veteran parliamentarian Suranjit Sengupta declined to comment on the legal position as regards Swapan's JS membership but spoke on the legal measures to follow.

former party colleague.

"If anybody brings the issue to the notice of the Speaker, only then the issue can come for discussion. Before that it won't be proper to comment on the matter," he said adding that Article 70 does not function automatically.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed in a statement on Tuesday blamed the ruling party for hooking an opposition MP, offering him ministership, and accused it of misusing Article 70.

Meanwhile, BNP has decided to notify the Speaker on Swapan's 'crossing the floor' but the letter was not sent till yester-

Despite his earlier announcement, Swapan did not

Swapan then joined the BNP after the 1975 political changeover but abandoned the party and joined the Jatiya Party in 1986. Prior to the June 1996 general election both the BNP and the JP offered him nomination. But he opted for a BNP ticket and was elected MP from Sirajganj-7 JS con-

the last 19 months, Swapan joined the AL government as a deputy minister. In a press statement issued soon after his oath-taking, Swapan claimed that he had joined the 'government of national consensus' but did not mention that he deserted the BNP or joined the AL.

Fugitive held after gunfight with police in city

A fugitive in several cases was arrested with firearms after his gang exchanged gunshots with police at Shewrapara under Mirpur thana in the city

Tuesday evening.

Wage earners remit

6.371.75 crore during the 1996-97 fiscal year when 2,27,584

attend the parliament session yesterday. reports UNB.

Hasibur Rahman Swapan

By Staff Correspondent

person as Jahangir, 19, an accused in a number of cases, including murder filed with different thanas in the city.

Acting on a tip-off, Mirpur police conducted an operation at west Shewrapara at about 7:30pm. Sensing police presence, the gang opened fire on them. Both sides exchange fire for about 20 minutes.

The remittance from the wage earners amounted to Tk people went abroad with jobs,

PSC with Occidental

From page 1

analyse the contract terms and conditions and other related documents in detail, the sources

The lawyer also commented that the government's refusal to extend the contract would create an adverse impact on the on-going second round bidding.

The other lawyer, giving a detailed analysis of the PSC and the related issues, suggested that there are no legal option in the PSC which would allow any

extension. He, however, added the government might extend the contract after amending the PSC, but it might not safeguard the

interests of the country. Well-placed sources said there was a strong opinion in favour of the extension at a higher level in the government with the argument that Occidental might not pay the compensa-tion for the blow-out, estimated

to be no less than Tk 250 crore. This view is, however, strongly disputed by mid-level or lower-level functionaries. They say Occidental had another contract with the government for Block 12 and that there was no way the US com-

paying the compensation if the government went by the PSC Occidental has repeatedly tried to convince Petrobangla

officials that the reasons for its

pany could get away without

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Build nation with spirit of '71: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon all, including members of the Armed Forces, to "build up the nation with similar unity and sacrifice with which we liberated the country," reports UNB.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the graduation ceremony of the 22nd Army Staff Course, the 16th Naval Staff Course and the 18th Air Staff Course of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

"We are a peace-loving nation. We believe in the guiding principle of 'friendship to al and malice to none," she said, referring to agreement and understanding reached with the neighbouring countries on various bilateral issues. Hasina said the government

has taken effective measures for the welfare of the people in bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international forum like D-8 and BIMSTEC. Earlier on her arrival at the DSCSC, the Prime Minister was

received by Commandant of the

College Major General AM Mansur Ahmed. A total of 132 student-officers, including 33 overseas students from Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and

USA, graduated from the col-

The ceremony was attended by diplomats, chiefs of three services, Defence Secretary, high civil dignitaries, Principal Staff officers, Military Attaches and Defence Advisors of the foreign missions and other senior military officers and the directing staff and student-officers of the college.

BNP press confce on CHT today

Opposition BNP will hold a press conference on the latest situation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts at its central office at 6

pm today, reports UNB. The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the party's Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Committee at the party office yesterday, said a press re-

Chaired by Lt Gen (retd) Mir Saukat Ali, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Brig (retd) ASM Hannan Shah, Maj (retd) Haifuzuddin Ahmed MP and Jainul Abedin Farooque

From page 1

to grasp the speed and the ethos

of the changes the Prime Minis-

ter wanted to see through,"

Hasan told bureaucrats at the

meeting held at the Commerce

Investors alleged that bu-

reaucratic procedures often

wasted their time in the name

of providing gas, water and

telephone lines and acquiring

said offering of "one-stop-ser-

vice" to foreign entrepreneurs

was not sufficient to encourage

them to come here. "We have to

develop our own industrial

some 400 acres of land was

needed for four such proposed

parks. "We are looking for suit-

able sites along Dhaka-Chit-

tagong, Dhaka-Maoa, Dhaka-

Mymensingh and Dhaka-

the AL government has been

able to overcome European

Experts believed that though

He told The Daily Star that

parks to catch FDI.

A senior BOI official rightly

Ministry.

"... The bureaucracy was yet

MPs of ruling AL, JP praise govt successes

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Awami League and Jatiya Party MPs yesterday highly praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina "for her government's various successes that include signing of Ganges Water Treaty with India and Peace Accord with Shantibahini."

They were taking part in the general discussion in the Jatiya Sangsad on the address by President Shahbuddin Ahmed on the opening day of the year's first session of the Sangsad on January 14.

The opposition parties-Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami - have been boycotting Sangsad proceedings since August 30 last

AL legislator and Presidium member of the party Dr Mo-

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Feb 11: A three-day international seminar on Sylhet: History and Heritage, organised by the Bangladesh History Association begin in Sylhet today.

As many as seventy-two representatives from India, Holland, Japan, Norway and host Bangladesh are participating in the seminar.

Dewan Farid Gazi MP inaugurated the seminar at the Sylhet Auditorium. Hens Fredrik, ambassador of Norway, and Prof Md Habibur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology spoke on the occasion as special guests while Prof Sirajul Islam, President of the History Asso-

ciation, presided. The inaugural session was also addressed by Dr Sharifuddin Ahmed, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet, Hosne Ara Motahar, Prof K M Mohsin, Mohammad Ayub, Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet and Principal Mohiuddin Shiru.

In the first business session, a paper titled The Importance of Sylhet in Research on Regional History of Bangladesh was read out by Prof K M Mohsin. Eight other papers were also read out and discussed in three sessions

hammed Selim said in the House yesterday the signing of peace accord with Shanitibahini was a great achievement of the government of Sheikh Hasina. "I do not know whether a second such great in-

cident is to be found in the world history." He, however, identified some sectors where the 'government should take effective steps to improve the situation.' The sectors include power-supply law and order, foreign investment, agriculture and student

politics. Golam Farooq Avi of Jatiya Party, which is a partner in the government of Sheikh Hasina. praised the Prime Minister as she has successfully resolved the Chittagong Hill Tracts problem — a problem which she had inherited from the previous governments— by signing the peace accord."

He urged the government not to hand over Anup Chettia to 'a neighbouring country which would hang him in the name of trial.' "Anup Chetia of Assam has taken shelter in our country for safety."

Others who took part in the discussion include State Minister for Education Zinnatunnesa Talukder and Kamal Majumder of Awami League.

Earlier, Deputy Speaker Ab-dul Hamid who presided over yesterday's sitting of the House disposed of a call attention notice. Another was kept in abeyance as the minister concerned was not present in the House.

Demand for a change of the present timing of parliament sitting -11:00 am to 3:00 pm without any break— came from JP whip Fazle Rabbi. Rabbi argued that the MPs had to spend time for their respective electorate during office hours. "Besides, with the present timing of sitting of the House, we cannot offer Zohr prayer in jamaat."

The Deputy Speaker observed that the present timing should not appear an obstacle to anyone in offering the prayer in jamaat. He, however, assured the JP legislator that he would request the Speaker to call a meeting of the JS Business Advisory Committee to review the

The session was adjourned at 2:45 pm to resume at 11:00 this morning.

situation.

Cloths worth Tk 5.5 lakh robbed in city

By Staff Correspondent Dacoits robbed cloths worth about Tk 5.5 lakh after hijacking a truck carrying from Rayerbagh area under Demra thana in the city early yester-

Police said a gang of about 12 armed men on board an empty truck intercepted the truck carrying the cloths near Punam Cinema Hall at Rayerbagh at about 1 am.

Rice price

Farmers in the northern disthe graining stage.

An agriculture department official at Kurigram said Aman production had dropped to about 2.2 tons per hectare from the previous year's 2.7 tons be-

cause of weather condition. Farmers and millers are confused about what will be the future trend of rice price. People

"If we have a good Boro harvest, and if prices in India drop, rice will become cheaper here.' said Mohiul Islam Mukul, a miller at Ulipur thana.

Meanwhile, the situation has hit some poverty striken pockets in Rangpur. Kurigram is one of those.

Chilmari, Mokaram Ali, 40, was trying to sell some firewood.

"The situation is very bad this year," said Ali of Sukher Char village who could harvest only 22 maunds of rice from his three acre land. "I had to sell most of the rice to pay off the moneylenders. Now, I am pen-

He has already sold two of his goats to survive.

Shantibahini

Dipti Shankar Chakma, Presistrongly protested the arrests.

They said the three were arrested when they went to Na-

Transport workers

From page 1 houses were gutted and 50 people injured in the two fire inci-

workers' office in the town.

Additional police were deployed in Tomchham Bridge, Thakurpara, Dshaktala and Asadpurto areas to avoid further trouble.

Food deficit

From page 1 the concern expressed by Advocate Fazle Rabbi (JP) who apprehended a lower harvest of boro due to the cold spell that

A member from Fulbaria, Dinajpur, expressed concern at the rising price of rice in his district where the coarse variety was selling at Tk 16 per kg. He said only two dealers for operation of OMS in 16 unions under Fulbaria thana would be quite inadequate to bring down the price.

was higher.

From page 1

Baten said, "Quality of imported rice, mainly Swarna variety, is not good at all and its price is also at par with our local varieties. So, people in Rangpur pre-fer buying local rice."

tricts said the yield was less because of no rainfall in November when the rice plants were in

are still panicked.

At Kurigram market in

From page 1

The statement issued by Prasit Khisa, General Secretary of the Pahari Gano Parishad, dent of his faction of PCP and Ms Kabita Chakma, President of Hill Women's federation

niarchar bazar.

The workers also damaged two fire service vans, two filling stations, and the transport

affected the seedlings.

He pleaded for appointment of OMS dealers in every union of the districts where the price

FDI: Govt unhappy over performance

From page 1 fering 40% to Texaco/Chevron

No revised offer were submitted to the Government by Tullow/Chevron/Texaco. jointly or separately. The points of agreement between the parties, and the one area of disagreement, were clearly set out in a joint letter from Tullow, Texaco and Chevron to the Negotiation Committee."

and sent to jail, by a second class magistrate in the Kishore-

obtained permission from his highhandedness of the police.

PW-51 discloses in court

Farooq wilfully gave his confessional statement

A former metropolitan magistrate in the CMM court yesterday said Lt Col (retd) Sayed Farooq Rahman had willfully given his statement confessing his involvement in the killing episode of Bangabandhu, reports UNB. M Afzalur Rahman, the 51st

Bangabandhu Murder Case. said the accused, Farook, was told before giving the statement that he was giving the statement neither by force nor after succumbing to torture. Rahman, now a deputy director at the Board of Investment, had recorded the confessional

prosecution witness of the

statements of Accused Lt Col (retd) Sayed Farooq Rahman and Lt Col (retd) Sultan Shahriyar Rashid Khan. The PW-51 was cross-examined by Farooq's counsel Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman at the

District and Sessions Judge's Court of Kazi Golam Rasul. He told the court that he had followed section 364 of CrPC while recording the six-page confessional statement of Fa-

roog on December 19, 1996. After recording the statement, Rahman said, he sent the

He said he recorded the statement of the accused by the order of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate and as per provision. He also gave certificate being satisfied after the state-

ment. The former metropolitan magistrate said he read out the whole confessional statement to the accused and the accused put 11 signatures in the recorded statement admitting

During cross-examination by Farooq's counsel, the witness

the lawyer, the witness said there was no illegality in recording the confessional statement of the accused and he did not take the statement un-

The proceedings of the court

Australia assures aid

enjoyed long-standing traditional ties and "we want to build upon the foundations of this relationship." Incidentally Australia was the first developed country to accord recognition to

He termed his visit as "productive and successful" and said his visit was on the wings of Australia's effort to build a bridge with South Asia. Australia, he said, observed 'Year of South Asia' last year. Downer visited India last year while on his current tour he came to Bangladesh after touring Pak-

The visiting minister referred to the largest development assistance provided to Bangladesh in South Asia this year to the tune of 33.3 million Australian dollars and mentioned about steps to fund the setting up of a human rights commission here. Two cricketers would be trained up in Australia while an additional

formed. Downer lauded Bangladesh's success in the field of cricket and said, "I am stating as a cricket playing nation and personally as a cricket fan that Bangladesh would emerge as a truly great cricketing nation and be a part of the international cricket club. "Cricket would also increase the people

employment rate which presently was around 8.5 per cent. He could not give the immigrant quota allocated for Bangladesh, but said that presently the number of Bangladeshis

Australia adopting a policy of discrimination in accepting immigrants, replied, "We have a tion policy."

support peaceful resolution through diplomatic means."

The parties disagreed only on the equity split with Tullow of-

and 10% to Bapex while Tex-

aco/Chevron requested 60%.

Akhteruzzaman

ganj district court. He, however, tional district magistrate.

party for the press conference, he answered in the positive, saying that the BNP had suspended his party activities only and that he had to call the press conference to share his experience in the lower courts and the

form of the order sheet, he did not put any comment of any ill treatment to the accused as there was no complaint from the accused. Denying a suggestion from

der any duress, nor was the signature of the accused taken

From page 1

would be determined later. Bangladesh and his country Bangladesh.

istan

24 scholarships would provided to Bangladeshi scholars, he in-

to people contact between Dhaka and Canberra." Responding to a question. Downer said that the number of immigrants being taken to Australia has declined recently because of the prevailing huge un-

living in Australia would be in the neighbourhood of 10,000. Downer, when told by jour-

nalists that there were report of

non-discriminatory immigra-In response to another question he said, Iraqi President Saddam Hussain must allow UN inspectors to inspect weapons of mass destruction or be prepared to face military consequences. "However, we

Rejoinder

From page 1

was released on bail the next day by an order of the addi-When asked whether he had

serve it.

his guilt.

said he doesn't remember whether any custody warrant was produced before him when the accused was brought to him. He said in the prescribed

forcefully.

will resume on Monday.

Abdus Samad Azad in his brief remarks thanked his counterpart for his visit and termed Australia as a great neighbour and a good friend. Present at the press confer-

ence were State Minister for

Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan

Chowdhury, Australian High

Commissioner to Bangladesh

Charles Stuart and Additional

Earlier, Foreign Minister

Foreign Secretary Aminul Is-Earlier in the day, the Australian Foreign Minister called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban and Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina at her

Take keds off

Ganobhabari residence.

From page 1 for the Social Marketing Company (SMC) briefing yesterday at Noon, two of them wearing trainers, were asked by the club attendants to take off their shoes and wear sandals provided by the club. Otherwise,

enter the club," said an atten-When the SMC officials intervened, the club authorities admitted the reporters with the condition that they used the rear door. "As per the rules of the club, none can cross the

they would not be allowed to

front door wearing a pair of keds," the attendant said. A journalist's argument that the media men were there to carry out their professional duties just like a fireman would

attend a fire, did not melt the

2000 families From page 1 the shortage of rice in the market has been created as the local mahajans and hoarders purchased paddy from the farmers in October-November and later sold those to traders outside the district in December-January

thousand maunds of paddy were there sold out from the area, they said. Paddy bought from the farmers at Tk 225 to 240 per maund was sold out to rice traders of Katpatty, Ashuganj, Chandpur, Banaripara, Sonargaon, Madanganj and some

at a higher price. At least 30

other distant areas at Tk 425 to 450, they added. SMC lock out

the lock out." "We did not go into any kind of action whatsoever but continued to serve the organisation as usual," Gafur claimed. "Some over-ambitious high officials are trying to destroy the com-

pany for their personal gains,"

From page 1

"We have always tried to solve our problems peacefully through talks. Parvin Rashid, General Manager, Communication and Providers Training, Shaheed Ahmed, Natinal Sales Manager and Mofidul Haq. Manager, Human Resources Development, told us to sit with them at the conference room at about five pm", Gafur said.

"At that meeting, which was

friendly and peaceful, we mutu-

ally solved several problems

and consensus was reached that

we would again sit on February 8 at 10 pm to address the remaining problems. "On arrival at office on February 8, we found that the gates were locked up. We are now sure there is an ill motive

Gafur alleged, "Some dishonest higher officials of the SMC were misappropriating crores of taka from foreign aid and were constantly trying to get rid of dedicated employees who always gave their utmost to

behind lock out."

Federal Express

The World On Time

generate power for addressing

port volume.

has a track record of 'floorjumping' since he started his political career as a member of Awami League-backed Chhatra League in 1969.

stituency, comprising Shahjadpur thana. Being a BNP lawmaker for

Police identified the arrested

Tk 6371 cr in '96-97

failure to fulfil its work commitment were beyond its control and that, therefore, Occidental should not be held responsible for it. The US company put the "Magurchhara incident" as one

of the reasons for its delay in

work. It also said that it had ex-

perienced difficulties in mobil-

ising rig due to non-availability of equipment throughout the Quoting legal opinions, a source said that these were "very weak points". Firstly, Occidental had to declare the Magurchhara incident as 'force majeure' under the PSC terms to make it a solid reason for its

jeure on January 8 last -- only three days before the termination of the contracts and more than six months after the Magurchhara incident. According to the PSC, one should declare force majeure immediately after an incident. "It cannot be applied with retrospective effect," the source said

quoting the legal advice.

had failed to do so.

Unfortunately, Occidental

thought of invoking force ma-

"Secondly, a contractor is responsible for its sub-contracts and equipment mobilisation," the source added. Above all, it was mandatory

for Occidental to apply for extension at least 60 days before the termination deadline. But it

> Union fish ban and apparel duty exemption crises, the new challenges for it are to maintain a competitive edge of Bangladesh's products in the world market since its South East Asian competitors had made their currencies cheaper. According to BGMEA which

Aricha roads," he added.

Int'l seminar on Sylhet: History & Heritage begins

demanded refixation of the value of taka at Tk 50 for one US dollar, apparel and knitwear orders worth about Tk 20 crore have not been placed because of a "stronger" taka in comparison with the currencies of South East Asian countries.

Officials of the Export pro-

motion Bureau spoke about

their limitations such as "in-

tervention" by the commerce

ministry into their activities

and "too inadequate, funds for creating new markets. They say they do not enjoy "real autonomy" though EPB has been an autonomous organisation under the "EPB Ordinance of 1978."

EPB officials mentioned

At least 50 per cent of the

that in 1980-81 EBP had an an-

nual budget of Tk 1.4 crore and

amount is spent for attending

it was Tk 2.4 crore in 1996-97.

various international trade fairs and it is becoming tougher day-by-day because of a gradual devaluation of 'taka,' they said. During 1980-81, Bangladesh had earned Tk 1,160 crore from its exports and the earning rose to Tk 18,813 crore in 1996-97. "But, our budgetary allocation did not increase proportionately though we helped expand

the export basket and markets

throughout the globe," a senior

EPB official told The Daily

The state minister, however, said, "It would be extremely frustrating if the dynamism and vision of the Prime Minister impeded by bureaucratic red Commerce Secretary Alam-

gir Farouq Chowdhury said,

Bangladesh's missions have

been given fresh directives to

attain the targeted exports of

5,000 this financial year." He

told this correspondent "We

have taken the challenge to at-

tain the export target this fis-Farouq said that the commerce ministry looks into the performance of commercial councilors and economic officers abroad. But, he claimed, there was none against whom any exporter lodged any com-

actions against any councilor,

unless someone makes a com-

The State Minister expressed

his dismay at the inordinate de-

plaint in recent years.

plaint," he explained.

ment and raise exports.

lay that sometimes takes place in responding to the queries and needs of the investors. He, however, hoped that the problems would be addressed soon. He felt that Bangladesh's missions abroad needed technical expertise and skilled councilors to attract foreign invest-

"We believe that most of the commercial councilors abroad are not capable of promoting trade," said Mostafa Golam Quddus, president of the BG-**BGMEA Vice President Nurul**

Huq Sikder said he believed "e-

conomic diplomacy" of Sheikh

Hasina's government had failed

totally as per as exports and

trade disputes were concerned.

Bangladesh's High Commission

in Canada failed to detect im-

porters involved in a fraudu-

lence case regarding the use of

Bangladesh's quota given by that country. "We asked our Canada mission to find out fraud importers there who had used Bangladesh's name and used our quota for more than 100,000 pieces of apparel last "We can't take any punitive year. But the mission did not succeed." As a result, according to him, Bangladesh had lost the

quota for those items.

dent Golam Mostafa said: "Officials of each ministry love to praise our contribution to the economy but whenever we face any problem none wishes to take any responsibility. One ministry sends us to another." He felt that commercial counseling in the EU headquarters should be strengthened.

Bangladesh Frozen Foods

Exporters Association Presi-

accused to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate along with all records and documents.