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Candidates for job at PG Hospital go on rampage

By Staff Correspondent
More than 3,000 candidates vying for the post of ward boys in PG Hospital went on the rampage as all the examinees reportedly did not get seats for participating in the examination yesterday.

Witnesses said the agitated candidates started shouting and threw chairs creating panic in the hospital premises at about 11 am.

Police restored to lathi charge to disperse the angry youths. However, no injury was reported in the incident.

Second officer of Ramna thana said the candidates became angry as the number of chairs were less than that of the candidates. The authorities arranged the examination inside the hospital premises.

Police said the authorities postponed the scheduled test following the trouble. However, none was arrested in connection with the incident or no case was lodged in this regard.

PM opens IEB convention at Rajshahi today

RAJSHAHI, Feb 28: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally inaugurate the 42nd annual convention of the Institution of Engineers of Bangladesh (IEB) at IEB Rajshahi Centre at 9 am tomorrow, reports BSS.

About two thousand engineers including 35 noted engineers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Britain will attend the convention.

DUTA silent procession today

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has decided to bring out a silent procession today to protest the rowdysim at Shaheed Minar on February 21, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the DUTA yesterday with its president Prof Yusuf Haider in the chair.

A press release of the DUTA said the decision was taken unanimously to protest the incident in which some teachers were manhandled after arrival of the leader of the opposition at the Shaheed Minar at about 11:30 am.

The processions will start from Aparajeo Bangla at 10:30 am and end at Central Shaheed Minar.

Rohingyas

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protest any move for repatriation. They also kept the dead body of a refugee for the last three days and claimed he died due to police torture.

Kutupalong camp accommodates 9,500 refugees. Over 11,000 refugees live in another camp at Nayapara under Teknaf thana of the district.

Officials outside Kutupalong camp said that a refugee, Dil Mohammad, died of heart failure at the age of 70 on Thursday, but militant refugees refused to hand over the body for autopsy.

Agitating refugees today used women and children at the camp as pawns to shield themselves from intervention by the administrative and chanted anti-repatriation slogans.

A section of refugees, who tried to collect their ration denying the militants' orders, were forced out of the camp.

Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka adds: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday that the Foreign Minister of Myanmar would visit Dhaka towards the end of March. The long-standing issue of repatriation of the remaining 21,000 Baysa refugees would come up for discussion during the visit, he hoped.

An earlier deadline set by the Myanmar authorities for completion of refugee repatriation expired on August 15 last with some 21,000 refugees still remaining in two camps. Since then, Bangladesh repeatedly urged Myanmar for talks on resumption of repatriation.

Gangsters

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were supposed to have their lunch in Feni and return to Dhaka by air in the afternoon and stay in the capital till evening. The Cairn chief was scheduled to stay in Dhaka for a few more days.

But following this incident, both the Shell and Cairn executives left Bangladesh immediately after returning from Chittagong by a helicopter.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP chief Begum Khaleida Zia speaking at the BNPPP meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. — Star photo

PM lays foundation of thermal power plant at Barapukuria

BARAPUKURIA (Dinajpur), Feb 28: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today laid the foundation of 300 megawatt coal-based thermal power plant, the first of its kind in the country, reports UNB.

An estimated 0.83 million tons of coal will be extracted from the Barapukuria coal mine will be used every year to generate electricity from the plant.

The 1,500-crore power plant project was approved in the ECNEC meeting on February 22. When completed in 2001-2002, the power plant will meet the lion portion of electricity for the northern districts.

With an estimated reserve of 390 million metric tons of coal, the mine will go into operation from the year 2001 to extract 64 million metric tons of coal.

Everyday some 3,300 metric tons of coal will be extracted from the mine. The total thermal capacity of 390 million metric tons of coal reserved in the mine is equivalent to 10.44 trillion CFT of gas.

During drilling of shaft about 4,000 metric tons of coal have so far been extracted from this mine.

Briefing the Prime Minister about the prospect and progress of the project, Petrobangla chairman Mosharraf Hossain said "a new horizon will be opened in the energy sector after the completion of this project."

PM: Opposition demands

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in parliament, she said, "If we make any mistake, they can ask question in parliament. But if they (Opposition) don't come to the parliament, then nothing will happen."

Hasina said the proceedings of parliament are broadcast live in radio and people know what is happening in parliament.

When BNP was in power, people did not have the chance to know about the parliament proceedings, she said and appealed to the Opposition to "come back to parliament and work for the welfare of the people."

Referring to recent Union Parishad polls, she said elections were held in peaceful atmosphere as the "voting rights of the people have been established by this government."

Refuting propaganda by certain quarters, Hasina said, "We are working hard to build the country and ensure basic needs of the people."

She said her government is solving the national problems one by one and referred to the signing of the Ganges Water Treaty which "realised the legitimate share of water."

The government is planning to build a Ganges Barrage, the Prime Minister said and announced that an international seminar on the barrage will be held on March 8.

She said proper utilisation of Ganges water can be ensured by constructing this barrage that would increase agricultural production by two to three times.

Referring to the peace agreement on Chittagong Hill Tracts, Hasina said a war-like situation was prevailing there for the last two decades, but peace has been restored with the signing of this accord.

The Prime Minister said the government has also taken up a Tk 360 crore project for the development of ideal villages.

"We want to give special emphasis on the development of the neglected northern region," she said and declared that a tourism centre will be built near the Kantaji Mandir and a full-fledged land port will be set up at Hilli.

Addressing the officials of the project, the Prime Minister directed the officials to complete the project within the stipulated time.

Hasina also asked them to remain alert so that no money is wasted during the implementation of the project.

Sheikh Hasina visited the coal mine project and went to the proposed power plant site and laid the foundation stone.

From Barapukuria, the Prime Minister went to Madhyapara Hard Rock Project. There is a reserve of 174 million metric tons of hard rock in the mine.

Addressing a spontaneous gathering near the Hard Rock project site, Hasina said with completion of the Coal and Hard Rock projects and, setting up of the power plant, a massive development process will be started in the area.

Awami League Leader Abdul Jalil, Energy Minister Lt Gen (retd) Nurul Karim, Health and Family Welfare Minister Salauddin Yusuf, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Satisch Chandra Roy, Awami League central Publicity Secretary Abdul Mannan, Whip Mizanur Rahman Manu, Abdur Rahim and other local Awami League leaders were with the Prime Minister.

JU students block Dhaka-Aricha road for 3 hrs

Students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday blocked the Dhaka-Aricha Highway at the university's Dairy Farm gate demanding speed breakers on the road.

Thousands of vehicles remained stranded during the three-hour blockade which began at around 10 am.

The students have threatened a continuous road blockade if their demand is not met within the next seven days.

They left the highway following a request by Savar thana police at 1 pm.

Ershad returns today

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad returns home from Saudi Arabia today, reports UNB.

The former president went to Saudi Arabia for medical check up. He also performed Omrah and offered *fateha* at the grave of Hazrat Muhammad (SM) at Medina.

Transit route

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after the expiry of six months." This review will be done shortly, the envoy said.

The land transit route is facing problems due to lack of customs facilities, operational delays and some infrastructural problems.

Responding to another query, he said there has to be some sort of written agreement acceptable to both the sides.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said they discussed all the issues relating to parliament and the interests of the country.

Top AL negotiator Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim told reporters that they would continue the talks for a solution, but he did not elaborate.

According to sources in both the camps, the AL and BNP negotiators yesterday further bargained on reinstallation of the pontoon bridge leading to founder of BNP late Ziaur Rahman's mazar and allowing public rallies on the Tophkana Road.

About street rallies, the ruling party argued that allowing certain roads for public rallies would result in similar demands by other parties. However, AL sources in the meeting claimed that the party succeeded in convincing the BNP on both the issues, assuring the opposition party of their sincere efforts to resolve the two problems in continued discussions once the latter returned to parliament.

The BNP leaders were now found flexible on the street rally issue but maintained obstinacy on the pontoon bridge issue, said an AL negotiator.

In yesterday's talks, the AL was represented by Nasim, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, PM's Adviser Suranjit Sengupta and Whip Mostafa Rashid Suja, Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah and Whip Abdus Shahid, who attended Friday's meet, were not present yesterday.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury joined the BNP delegation yesterday, raising its strength to six. The other BNP negotiators were Opposition Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Party Secretary General Abdur Mannan Bhuiyan, M Saifur Rahman, Col (retd) Oli Ahmed and MK Anwar.

Meanwhile, briefing newsmen, Khandakar Delwar Hossain said yesterday's meeting of the BNP parliamentary wing authorised Begum Zia and the party standing committee to take a final decision on the party's return to parliament on the basis of outcome of the ongoing AL-BNP talks.

In reply to a question, he said "we're not opposed to going back to the House... A decision to this effect can come only if the current dialogue with the ruling party succeeds. We may also convene a BNPPP meet again, depending on the outcome of today's dialogue."

BNPPP meeting sources said, Begum Zia asked the party lawmakers if she should decide on the party's return to parliament keeping in view the fact that the government was yet to accept their major demands. The party MPs then empowered Begum Zia to decide on it in consultation with party's standing committee members.

He expressed satisfaction over the arrangement of the fair this year which, he said, was consistent with the spirit of the Amar Ekushey.

He said that the spirit of Ekushey should be materialised through using Bangla in every sphere of life.

Hearings of corruption cases against Benazir begin tomorrow

LAHORE, Feb 28: More than one year after her government was thrown out in disgrace, Benazir Bhutto has been charged with three accounts of corruption, court officials said today, reports AP.

Ms Bhutto was sacked in November 1996 on charges of corruption, economic mismanagement and abuse of power. She has denied all the charges.

Hearings into the three charges of corruption against Ms Bhutto, her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and her mother, Nusrat Bhutto, will begin on Monday in the eastern Punjab capital of Lahore, officials said.

'Punish persons involved in rowdysim at Shaheed Minar'

By Staff Correspondent
A number of women's organisations have demanded exemplary punishment to the persons involved in rowdysim at the Central Shaheed Minar on February 21.

At a rally jointly organised by Sangrami Nari Samaj and Mahila Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, speakers called on the women community to come forward to launch a massive movement against what they said the conspiracy to diminish the sanctity of the Shaheed Minar and the spirit of Bengali nationalism.

The rally was attended by Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, Mahila Muktiyoddha Sangsa, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Nijera Kari, Proshika, Nari Motiree, CDS, Akota Nari Samity, Mahila Krala Sangstha and Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee.

Presided over by Dr Makhuda Nargis, the rally was addressed, among others, by Maleka Banu, Khushi Kabir, Fouziah Khondakar and Shamsunnahar Siddique.

Poet Begum Sufia Kamal and Dr Nilima Ibrahim also sent their messages at the rally condemning the rowdysim at the Shaheed Minar.

Imported goods looted from Ctg Port

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 28: Alleged armed miscreants looted imported goods worth around Taka two lakh from Shed No 2 inside Chittagong Port last night, police and port sources said.

The miscreants stormed into the Shed No 2 at 2 am and looted the goods, including tyres and sewing machines at gun point, they said.

Two security personnel were injured and three others were tied up with ropes while they tried to resist the miscreants, port sources said.

The injured were admitted to port hospital.

A case was filed with port thana, but none was arrested till filing of this report.

Bank manager suspended for defalcation of Tk 1 cr in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Feb 28: The Manager of the Lalidighirpar branch of Eastern Bank Limited has been put under suspension on charge of defalcation of Tk one crore from different accounts in the bank, an official confirmed today.

The manager, Abu Ahmed Siddique Khoshru, was placed on suspension February 26 while Saad Uddin Ahmed, a Vice-President of the bank, has taken over charge of the branch today.

A two-member audit team from the bank's head office started internal audit from today, said the official.

When contacted, the newly appointed manager of the bank confirmed the matter but declined to give any details and said, until the audit is finalised, it is not possible to confirm the exact amount misappropriated.

Book fair ends

From Page 1
Some 350 new books from different publications were released at this year's fair.

This year's fair was a different one from that of previous years. For the first time in recent years, the fair was reduced to the academy premises. Unlike the previous years no untoward incident, excepting the one at the canteen of the Bangla Academy, took place during the three-week-long fair.

The concluding ceremony was held at 5 pm at the Academy premises.

Chaired by the president of Bangla Academy poet Shamsur Rahman, the session was addressed by Mahfuzur Rahman and Syed Fazul Haque. The Director General of the Bangla Academy, Syed Anwar Hossain delivered the welcome address.

Habibur Rahman in his speech said that setting up of the Bangla Academy was the direct result of the historic Language Movement.

He said that the book fair at the premises of the Bangla Academy was being organised to pay respect to the martyrs of the Language Movement.

He expressed satisfaction over the arrangement of the fair this year which, he said, was consistent with the spirit of the Amar Ekushey.

He said that the spirit of Ekushey should be materialised through using Bangla in every sphere of life.

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PHILIPS

2 lakh women, girls trafficked from Bangladesh in 10 yrs

By Staff Correspondent

A regional and a global conference on the theme of 'Organising Against Sexual Exploitation' will be held in Dhaka this year.

Leaders of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) at a press conference in the city yesterday, said the two four-day conferences will begin on June 26 and November 26 respectively.

The announcement followed a two-day 'planning meeting' organised by the CATW-Bangladesh chapter. The conferences will aim at bringing the issue of alarming rise in trafficking and sexual exploitation into the focus of international communities.

In the last 10 years, an estimated 2,00,000 women and girls between the ages of 12 and 30 years have been trafficked from Bangladesh to Pakistan and Middle East, said a paper presented at the planning meeting by Advocate Sigma Huda, convener of CATW-Bangladesh.

Representatives from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines attended the planning meeting, sponsored by the Danish Embassy in Dhaka.

Advocate Sigma Huda said at the press conference that they had identified various issues to be discussed at the regional and the global conference.

The issues included sexual exploitation and child prostitution, armed conflict, employment in foreign countries, political commitment, culture, migration, new information technology and accountability of the governments.

Besides, meetings with the survivors of sexual exploitation will be arranged at the conferences. Initiative will also be taken to identify the exploiters, the CATW leaders said.

The organisers expected that representatives from 15 Asian countries will attend the regional conference while the global meet will be attended by representatives from 53 countries.

The participants will include representatives from governments, NGOs, human rights bodies and various international organisations.

Yesterday's press conference was also attended by the participants in the two-day planning meeting.



Members of Muktiyoddha Shishu-Kishore Command burning an effigy of Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday protesting 'desecration' of Shaheed Minar on February 21. — Star photo

Akram to join team in SA

ISLAMABAD, Feb 28: Fast bowler Wasim Akram is to join Pakistan's cricket team in South Africa for the remaining part of the tour, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials said today, reports AFP.

"The board has selected Wasim Akram to join Pakistan team in South Africa to strengthen the squad," PCB secretary Waqar Ahmed said.

He said Akram had stated in writing that his shoulder injury had healed and he was fit to play.

The former captain was dropped recently amid a controversy triggered by match-fixing allegations against him following the national team's poor performance at a four-nation tournament at Sharjah.

He later appeared before a parliamentary committee which cleared him and allowed him to play for Pakistan. The committee was set up to inquire into cricket scandals in recent years that have harmed the image of Pakistani cricket.

Yeltsin fires 3 ministers

MOSCOW, Feb 28: President Boris Yeltsin fired three top members of his administration today, three days after warning that he intended to fire the "culpits" responsible for Russia's economic woes, reports AP.

Yeltsin's office announced that the president had fired his transportation and education ministers, along with a deputy prime minister, Valery Serov.

The official reason given was that the officials are moving to other jobs. But Yeltsin had warned on Thursday that he intended to identify those responsible for the country's wretched economic state and fire them.

Plane to ferry Hajj pilgrims arrives today

By Special Correspondent
A DC-10-15, chartered by Bangladesh Biman to ferry Hajj pilgrims from March 3, is expected to arrive today.

It failed to reach Dhaka yesterday as scheduled, Biman sources said.

Another DC-10-50 is expected to arrive shortly.

The aircraft have been chartered from a Brussels based company.

Clash over possession of market: 5 hurt

By Staff Correspondent
At least five persons, including a woman were injured as two armed groups exchanged gunshots and exploded cock-falls over possession of a market at Nawab Bari under Kotwali thana in the city yesterday evening.

Police said of the injured three were identified as Nasrin, Sumon and Liton. They were admitted to Mitford Hospital.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when a group of people equipped with fire arms attacked the market to take control of it at the Pukur Par at about 5:30 pm.

Attackers and their opponents traded several gunshots for about half an hour. A huge number of crackers were also exploded during the clash.

Indian polls

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Front coalition with 21. The exit poll, however, suggested that those figures would not be enough for the BJP, traditionally weak in the south and east, to launch a successful coalition with its allies.

Analysts earlier forecast neither the BJP nor the Congress, in decline after ruling India for 45 of 50 years since independence, would be able to command a majority. Party sources from both groups today admitted secret talks with potential allies were already underway.

The Congress and the United Front, a multi-party minority coalition toppled in November, had earlier hinted they could link up. Both are determined to keep the nationalists, whom they accuse of religious bigotry, out of power.

Six constituencies, mostly in remote mountain areas, will vote after the other votes are counted on March 2.

In the volatile state of Kashmir, citizens complained that paramilitary soldiers deployed for security were forcing reluctant citizens to vote.

Separatists in the state called for a poll boycott and a two-day general strike that began Friday.

Voter turnout was 37 per cent, far below the latest round's national average of 50 per cent, the Independent Election Commission said.

Straggle was deserted during voting hours, but after polls closed many shops opened and people came out of their homes. Earlier in the day, most voters stayed off the snow-covered street, while police confronted stone-throwing protesters trying to enforce the boycott.

Peace on campus

From Page 1
ing the inaugural function of the 25th annual general meeting of National Council of Bangladesh Scouts at National Scouts Building here in the morning.

The President said we want our children be grown up as a worthy citizen and devote themselves in nation-building activities but they cannot be groomed properly due to lack of congenial academic atmosphere.

Shahbuddin said students resort to various ways for adopting unfair means in the examinations and they even dared demanding adoption of unfair means as their right.

Referring to the terrorist activities by a section of youths, he said, they are committing the misdeeds under the banner of various front organisations of different political parties.

"I pointed out the matter more than once to all, including the political leaders, and advised them to be alert about disastrous future," the President said with great regret that the political leaders were not seen to play their active role in bringing back congenial atmosphere in educational institutions.

President Shahbuddin, who is also the chief of Scouts, said on the backdrop of gloomy picture, the disciplined life of the scouts and their desire and effort for acquiring knowledge and building up characters create hopes among the people towards a good future.

"For this reason, stress the need for transforming the scout

movement into a real social movement," said the Chief Scout.

Later, the President distributed awards among the scouts.

The function was also addressed by Chief National Commissioner Manzoor-ul-Karim and president of Bangladesh Scouts Mohammad Mahbubuzzaman.

Bio-gas plants

From Page 1
which is about 60 per cent methane, also produces high quality organic fertiliser that is as good as any other commercially available fertiliser in the country," he added.

The chief guest of the seminar, Agriculture and Food Minister Matiya Choudhury, in her address said "I like to see success in this sector. But I regret to say that the departments concerned have not accomplished what they were supposed to achieve. We all start something but fail to complete it. That is the problem."