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# The Daily Star

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## Final phase of Shantibahini arms surrender today

**By Special Correspondent**

At least 222 members of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and its military wing, Shantibahini, are surrendering arms today at a ceremony in a remote frontier village in Khagrachhari, marking the formal end to decades of insurgency.

Field Commander of Shantibahini Ushatan Talukder will hand over a gun to Civil Aviation Minister Mosharraf Hossain, followed by others, at Dudukchhara village, 40 km off Khagrachhari.

It will be the last of the four-phase surrender of arms by Shantibahini cadres. Earlier in three phases, 1725 of them, including 'irregulars', surrendered arms since February 10.

A total of 1933 Shantibahini cadres were scheduled to surrender arms as part of an agreement signed between the PCJSS and the National Committee on Chittagong Hill

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## 7 pc annual growth rate envisaged Tk 1959.52b Fifth Five-Year Plan approved

The National Economic Council (NEC) has approved the Tk 1959.52 billion Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), envisaging a 7 per cent annual growth, reports UNB.

The NEC gave the approval at its meeting held in the city yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said 56 per cent of the total amount will be invested in the private sector while the remaining 44 per cent in the public sector.

The NEC also approved that 78 per cent of the total investment will be mobilised from local resources, including the money sent by expatriate

Bangladeshi wage earners.

The rest 22 per cent will be funded from foreign assistance and direct foreign investments, the planning minister said.

According to the 5th Plan, investment is expected to increase by five per cent in the agriculture sector, 14 per cent in the industrial sector and 23 per cent in the gas and energy sector during the five-year period.

The expected growth in the education sector is 6.5 per cent, health 6.3 per cent, commerce 7.9 per cent and transport sector 7.5 per cent.

The main objectives of the 5th Five-Year Plan are poverty alleviation, self-sufficiency in food and adequate employment generation.

The plan is also aimed at raising at least 50 per cent of the population above the poverty level and reducing population growth and strengthening the local bodies to ensure mass participation in uplift activities for human resources development and rural economic infrastructure development.

The plan also gives priority to people's participation and their initiatives for the development and diversification of export with a view to making the country self-reliant.

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked all officials of the Republic to work with sincerity for achieving the target of seven per cent growth rate to free the

See Page 12 Col 4

## PM asks officials Change attitude of misusing public money

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government is trying hard to establish a good governance by protecting the rights of the people and raising their standard of living, report agencies.

She said now emphasis has been laid on competence and the optimum utilisation of people's money instead of having a huge government infrastructure.

Addressing the foundation laying ceremony of the BCS Administration Academy and Institution Development Project at Shahbagh in the city, Hasina said the present government is taking prompt decisions for the interest of the nation.

"And it is your duty to implement the decisions properly for the interest of the people," she told the government officials.

She reminded them that all

See Page 12 Col 3

## Major contenders hold strategy sessions

**NEW DELHI, Mar 4:** With no single party receiving a majority in parliamentary elections, India's three major contenders held strategy sessions today to discuss ways to form a coalition government, report agencies.

All but a handful of seats for the 545-member lower house of parliament have been decided. No party won the 273 needed to govern alone.

"The political scenario is not yet clear, and the atmosphere is one of uncertainty," Congress party spokesman V N Gadgil told reporters.

Despite such caution from politicians across the spectrum, investors appeared confident. Stock prices soared on the Bombay exchange, apparently on the belief a stable government led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party will be formed shortly.

According to the latest tal-

lies, the BJP and its allies won 251 seats; Congress and allies, 166; the United Front, 96; and independents and others who could be drawn into one bloc or the other, 21.

New voting was ordered Thursday because of irregularities in another race. Of the remaining 10 seats, voting for eight has not yet been held, and two are appointed by the president.

By law, President K R Narayanan will decide which party—usually the one with the most seats—should be given a chance to govern. Once the party's leader is sworn in as prime minister, its claim will be tested in a vote of confidence.

Narayanan was expected to consult in the coming days with parties claiming they could form a government.

The Congress and the United

See Page 2

## 1 killed, 10 hurt as rival student groups clash at Tongi College

**By Staff Correspondent**

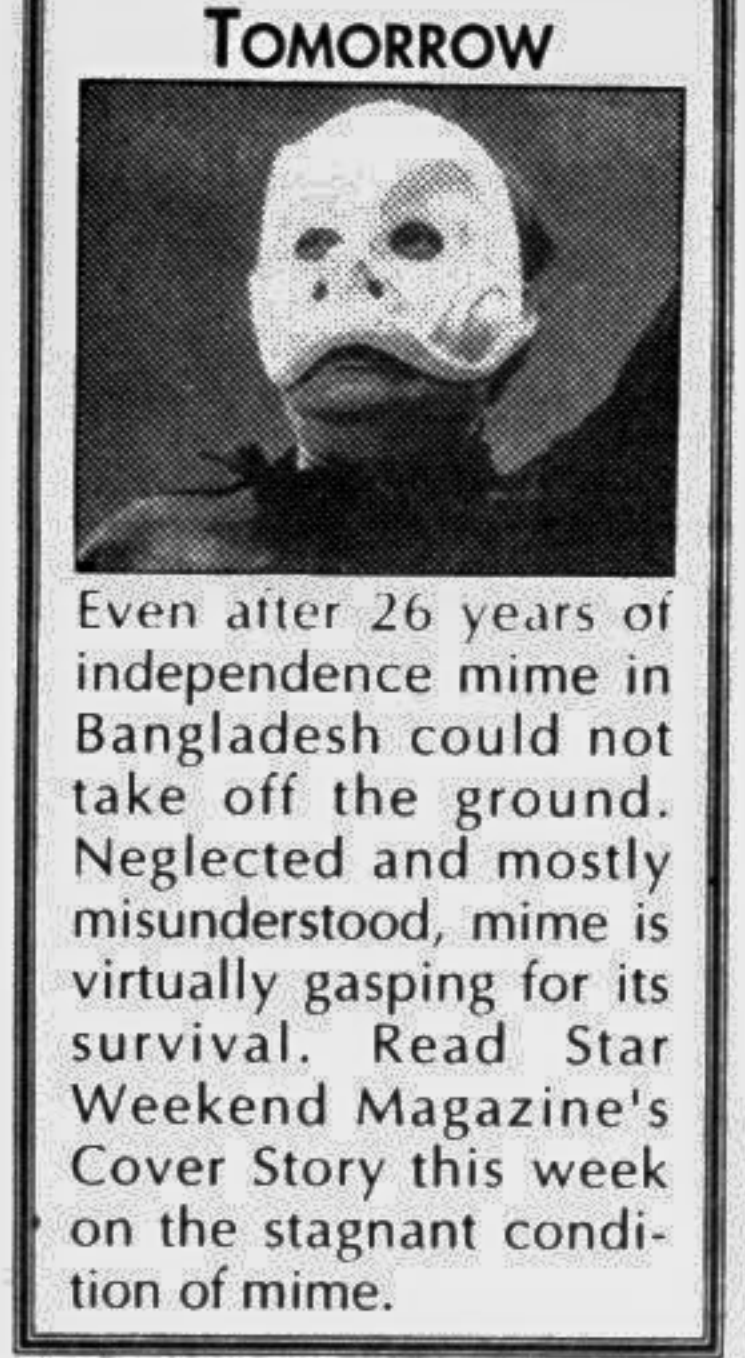
A young man was killed and at least 10 injured in an hour-long clash between two rival students organisations at Tongi Government College yesterday noon.

The victim, Mehdi Hasan Liton (21), died on the spot when the rival group fired on his back, according to witnesses.

Mehdi was rushed to Tongi Modern Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The injured were given first aid at Tongi Hospital and discharged.

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**TOMORROW**

Even after 26 years of independence mime in Bangladesh could not take off the ground. Neglected and mostly misunderstood, mime is virtually gasping for its survival. Read Star Weekend Magazine's Cover Story this week on the stagnant condition of mime.



The small stretch of the 70-acre Dhanmondi Lake, near Road 32, where about 70 per cent of its development work has been completed. —Star photo

## Ershad's leadership in JPPP may face challenge

**By Mizan Ali**

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad's leadership of JP Parliamentary Party may face a challenge under the provisions of the Constitution, party sources said.

The possibility of such a challenge surfaced in the wake of removal of Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju from the post of Secretary General of JP.

Without mentioning who will challenge Ershad's leadership of the JPPP, a leading party MP said "parleys in this regard are on among party law makers."

There is now a strong feeling that the party is not being run democratically and this might precipitate some changes in the leadership keeping in view the recent changes," he added.

Ershad could be replaced as leader of the JPPP if someone could prove majority support from the 32 party MPs under the provisions of Article-70 (2) of the Constitution, sources

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## Harassment by extortionists UMC suspends operation in Ctg Hill Tracts

**By Sharier Khan**

US oil company UMC, which has been working in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, has kept its operation suspended for the last few days due to lack of security.

Sources said that officials of the US company had been harassed by extortionists ever since it began seismic survey late last year. Few days ago, a senior defence official, provided by the government for the security of UMC, was shot and injured by extortionists and a geo-physicist of the company was kidnapped.

Following the incidents, UMC suspended its work and informed the government that it could not resume work until safety was ensured.

Suspension of UMC's work will ultimately cost the government as the 'operation expenditure' is recoverable from gas fields, when those are explored and developed.

A high level meeting of Petrobranga Tuesday discussed the security problem in the CHT region. This problem has taken an acute shape in the last one month. Defence forces can do a little in fighting any terrorist in the hill tracts at the moment.

The security issue is also going to be a major problem in all oil and gas exploration activities in the hill tracts, sources said expressing their fear.

British company Cairn is operating in the Semutang gas field which is just near the Chittagong Hill Tract region and its operation may also be affected in the future unless such terrorist activities are curbed.

"We have faced minor problems relating to security and extortionists. And we are cautious," Project Director of UMC Fariduddin Ahmed told The Daily Star Tuesday night. "But

See Page 12 Col 4

## SC rejects prayer for stay of extradition

**By SC Correspondent**

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday rejected the petition for provisional stay of extradition to India of ULFA leader Anup Chetia.

The court also rejected a prayer for provisional stay a High Court order which turned down a petition challenging the proposed extradition of Chetia.

Chief Justice Abu Taher Mohammad Afzal along with Justice Latifur Rahman, Justice Md

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## Article

**What an Unblemished Joy It Is! Success of AL-BNP Dialogue**

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents by MM Rezaul Karim

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## Supplements

Today's 16-page issue of The Daily Star contains a 3-page supplement on 'The Inauguration of Faysal Islami Bank of Bahrain' on Pages 13-15 and one page supplement on 'Bangladesh Agro Processor Association, on Page 16

## BNPPP meets Saturday

**By Staff Correspondent**

The BNP Parliamentary Party will meet on Saturday, a day before it is due to return to the Jatiya Sangsad.

Party Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting, scheduled to begin at 7 pm at the ninth-floor conference room of the Sangsad Bhaban, said a party press release yesterday.

BNP has decided to join the current JS session, ending a six-month boycott of the parliament, after signing a two-point agreement with the ruling Awami League on Monday.

In Saturday's meeting, the BNP lawmakers are expected to discuss various issues they would like to raise in the House and the party strategy to face the Treasury Bench in the changed political situation.

Meanwhile, the opposition legislators have started submitting questions and notices to the Parliament Secretariat.

## Dhanmondi lake Re-excavation work may be slashed by half

**By Morshed Ali Khan**

One of the vital components of the Dhanmondi Lake Development Project — re-excavation — has to be slashed by half because the sludge removal work could not be finished before the rainy season, officials involved in the project implementation apprehended.

"We have re-excavated a stretch of the Road 32 part of the lake, where 70 per cent work has been completed," said an official.

"But we have to drop the project's re-excavation component by at least half because the work could not be started in time due to complications arising from interference," he claimed.

"There is no way to complete the re-excavation of the whole lake before the rainy season. So the work has to be dropped," the official said. A committee com-

prising an LGED engineer, a WASA official and consultants is now surveying the lake bed to decide where to excavate how much.

At present the developers are excavating part of the lake near BDR Gate and the corner of Road-7 where, they said, there will be a 'separate pond for public bathing'.

When asked to elaborate on the 'interference' the source, requesting anonymity, said the LGED ministry 'all of a sudden' wanted to take up the massive sludge removal work and also the overall supervision of the project. The whole process took too long a time to be sorted out.

Sources also said that the developers have sought an additional one crore taka from the government for the re-excavation component of the project.

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**Each citizen now carrying foreign debt burden of Tk 5357**

Each citizen of Bangladesh is now carrying the burden of Tk 5,357 (125.45 US dollar) as foreign debt, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria told Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to Nurul Islam Nahid (AL-Sylhet), Kibria said the country's total unpaid foreign loan stood at Tk 66,585 crore (15,593.27 million dollar) till June 30, 1997.

He said the loan money was spent on various socio-economic development sectors, including agriculture, power, transport, industry, water resources, education, energy, natural resources, health, family planning and women and youth development.

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## 'Export earning from garments may exceed target by \$2b'

**By Staff Correspondent**

Apparel exports may fetch 4.5 billion US dollars this financial year against the target of 2.5 billion dollars.

This was disclosed by Mostafa Golam Quddus, President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was organised at a city hotel to introduce the newly-elected nine BGMEA executive committee members. The Sammilita Parishad panel led by Quddus swept the BCGMEA election held on February 25.

Quddus said that Bangladesh earned 3.4 billion US dollars from knitwear and apparel exports in the last financial year.

"We are now adding more value to our garments products. It is now 37 to 40 per cent against 32 to 33 per cent last year," he said.

BGMEA leaders also expressed their optimism about receiving additional garments quota from the US government soon. A BGMEA team will visit the US from March 9 to 14 and meet officials of the Labour and State departments there, they added.

Quddus said he had a meeting with US Ambassador in Dhaka John Holzman yesterday and discussed how to get an increased quota for Bangladesh.

During its visit to the US, the

See Page 12 Col 1

## Announcement

As a follow up of The Daily Star's initiative on "Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Speak Out" a seminar will be held on "Investment Opportunities for Young Entrepreneurs".

**Date** : 8th March, 1998  
**Time** : 6 p.m.  
**Venue** : British Council Auditorium  
**Speakers** : Faruk Sobhan, Executive Chairman, BOI  
Rokeya A Rahman, President, Bangladesh Employers' Association  
Syed Manzur Elahi, Chairman, Apex Group of Industries.

**Participation** : By Registration only (free of charge)

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## 500 feared dead as floods destroy 70 Pak villages

**QUETTA, Pakistan, Mar 4:** Troops and civilians mounted a huge rescue operation today after hundreds of people were feared dead in heavy floods that washed away 70 villages in Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province, reports AFP.

Officials said at least 40 bodies had been founded so far after gushing waters from the Kechh River swollen by two days of torrential rains wreaked havoc yesterday in the remote Turbat region, about 800 kilometers (500 miles) west of here.

More information from the area bordering Iran was awaited, but officials in provincial capital Quetta said there were fears the death toll

could surpass 500 as about 3,000 traditional mud houses had been "washed away."

A helicopter was rescuing marooned people, many perched on trees which they had climbed to escape the raging waters, officials said.

Thousands of livestock including sheep and goats perished in the deluge, following the biggest rise in water levels in the Kechh river in 200 years, they said.

"We have no information what happened to the families in these (flood-devastated) villages," Abdul Basit, a senior administration official in Turbat told AFP by telephone.

Basit said the death toll

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## DU officers continue strike

**By DU Correspondent**

All administrative activities of the Dhaka University have come to a virtual halt as the officers of the university continued their strike for the third consecutive day yesterday.

Officers of all universities of the country began a week-long strike from March 2 to realise their four-point demand.

The demands include provision for representation of officers in the Senate and Syndicate, revision of their pay-scale, extension of retirement age to 65 years from 60 years and stopping the 20 per cent cut from the pension of the officers.

Officers of the Dhaka Uni-

See Page 12 Col 8

## Bangabandhu murder case 'Accused army officers were absorbed in foreign service concealing identity'

The army officers allegedly involved in the August 15, 1975, killings were sent abroad with diplomatic assignments concealing their military identity, Bangladesh ambassador to Kuwait yesterday told the court as the 60th prosecution witness (PW) of Bangabandhu Murder Case, reports BSS.

Ambassador Abdullah Al Hassan, who was at that time Director General (Admin) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the court that the military designation had not been mentioned when the absconding accused army officers were absorbed in the Foreign Service. He however, did not elaborate the reasons behind it.

During his deposition, the witness identified the service records and the appointment letters of the absconding accused army personnel after verifying the judicial records. The District and Sessions Judge,

Dhaka, Kazi Golam Rasul recorded evidential documents as paper exhibits.

The witness told the court that the service records and the absconding accused army personnel were handed over to CID of Police by PW-Daud Ali, under his orders.

Earlier, when the hearing resumed, PW-59 Bakhtiar Hossain, a video shop owner, was

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**The American Alumni Association**

a non-profit Bangladeshi society that aims to promote fellowship among American graduates and increased educational interaction between Bangladesh and the United States

is seeking to form a register of American graduates in Bangladesh.

Individuals interested in taking part in this association are invited to contact 873-444 for further information.

D-103