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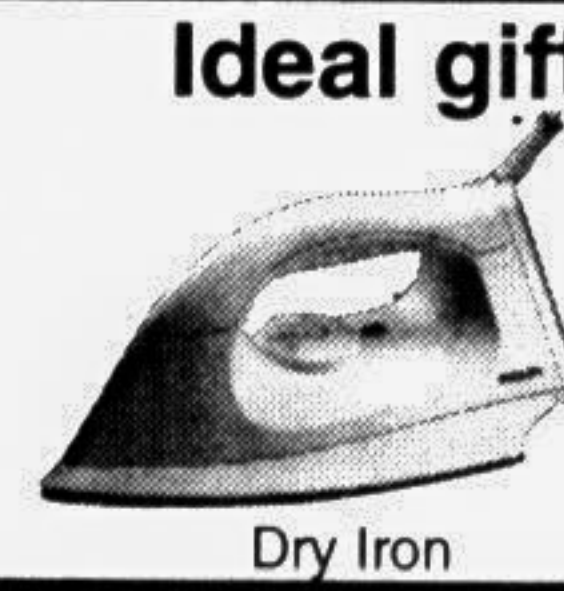
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PHILIPS

PM at BIT convocation 'Speed up application of technical know-how'

RAOZAN (Chittagong), Mar 5: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged engineers, agriculturists, physicians and scientists to work for strengthening economic infrastructure through optimum use of limited resources in scientific way, reports UNB.

"Government has taken up specific and target-oriented programmes to turn huge population into human resources," she said while addressing the first convocation ceremony of the Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) here.

Hasina said the expected development could not be achieved for slow application of technical know-how and science and technology.

In the first convocation of the institution, some 2,687 students from the year 1984-85 to 1992-93.

Hasina said the government is going to introduce a modern and scientific education system according to the recommendation of the national education policy formulation committee.

Steps will be taken to upgrade and modernise the technical education, she said, mentioning that the government

has taken a Tk 152 crore project for establishing 12 science and technological universities in the country.

In the current fiscal year, 16 more polytechnic institutions, including three for female students, will be set up, she added.

The Prime Minister said the government also determined to ensure congenial atmosphere in the educational institution.

She said steps have been taken to stop armed violence in the educational institutions and strict measures are being taken against the terrorists.

"We have no need to depend on terrorists in the party interest as we have an well organised and discipline party. If we get cooperation from other parties we can remove terrorism from the campus for good," she said.

Education Minister A S H K Sadique, BIT Chittagong Chairman Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, BIT council vice chairman Dr Nazrul Islam, BIT Chittagong Director Dr Shaymal Kanti Biswas also spoke on the occasion.

No conflict in JP, says Ershad

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad yesterday said there is "no conflict" in his party, reports UNB.

"Those who think there is strong disagreement in the Jatiya Party are living in a fool's paradise," he told a meeting of the JP leaders and workers at the party's central office.

Ershad expressed his concern over the price-hike of essentials, saying that Jatiya Party will organise people through holding meetings and processions against it.

"But we will not pursue the politics of hartal or destruction that may cause suffering the people. Our protest will be peaceful," he said.

Albert David

From Page 1

from the Tejgaon factory premises on February 25 during the raid."

The company claimed that it had applied to the DNC office for renewal of their licence to manufacture pethidine injections on September 11 last year.

When contacted, DNC officials failed to disprove Albert David's claim.

DNC Director (Administration), Kazi Mohammad Abul Mansoor, who deals with licences, could not say if Albert David was violating any regulation.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

National Board of Revenue
Dhaka

Notice

Sub: Regarding Illegal Import and Connection of Cellular Telephone

Illegal import of cellular telephone handset without paying customs duty has assumed an increasing trend. According to Customs Act, such imports are considered as smuggling. Any one possessing such illegally brought in handset, any one using it, any one selling it, any one buying it, any one providing connection to, any one availing of the connection, even any one who knows about but refraining from disclosing the information to customs official — all will be held offender of violating the Customs Act and be punishable. Under the circumstance, all are cautioned not to be involved with such smuggled in cellular handset.

2. The government under special consideration, offers an opportunity for regularisation of earlier imported illegal cellular handset by paying the applicable customs duty and Tk 100/= (one hundred) only as fine. Any one possessing such illegal handset may produce it for regularisation to the Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, in-charge of Dhaka Custom's House Taxation Group-3 (in case of Chittagong Customs House, Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, Preventive). This opportunity will remain open up to 15th March, 1998 till 5.00 PM. After that date, legal action will be taken against such handset and every one involved with it. In case any one facing any difficulty in regularisation by paying the customs duty, he may contact the undersigned.

3. Import of old and low quality/faulty cellular handset is prohibited. All importers and passengers coming from abroad are advised to refrain from such import.

4. Cellular telephone handset is not a baggage item. Passengers coming from abroad are advised not to carry such handset. In case of any passenger carrying a handset the applicable customs duty and legally imposed fine will be realised.

Mahmud Akhtar
DFP-4047-24/2 Second Secretary (Customs)
G-365 Phone: 838120-6/343

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1500 feared dead in Pak floods

TURBAT, Pakistan, Mar 5: A new wave of flood waters early today devastated another 35 villages in southwestern Pakistan where 1,500 people are feared dead, a senior official told AFP.

"The situation has worsened as more people are trapped in the sudden pre-dawn flooding," Fida Mohammad, Deputy Commissioner of Turbat said.

He said water receding from the rain-swollen Kechh river, which wreaked havoc in Turbat region two days ago, accumulated in Dasht river and swamped villages, 130 kilometers (80 miles) northwest of here.

At least 35 villages have been submerged by the overflowing Dasht river, he said.

Review petition

Nabi said he and Dr Kamal are examining whether Barrister Rafiq-ul Haque can be "ethically as well as legally" conduct the case because he (Rafiq-ul Haque) was the attorney general till December 17, 1990, while the order for detention of Ershad was issued on December 12, 1990.

Ershad quit power on December 6, 1990 in the face of a mass movement.

Ershad was arrested on December 11, 1990 and given detention with effect from December 12, 1990 under Section 3(1) of the Special Powers Act.

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City goes without gas

Khilgaon, Nandipara, Malibagh, Magbazar, Eskaton, Tejkuinipara, Kawranbazar and Kathalbagan.

Besides, gas supply was either not available or pressure was low at Lalbagh, Narinda, Sutrapur, Wari, Tipu Sultan Road, Zigatola, Rayerbazar, Hazaribagh, Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Elephant Road, Paribagh, Hatirpool, Green Road Kalabagan and other neighbourhoods.

Panicked people rushed to bazars to buy stoves, kerosenes and fuel wood, triggering a price hike of the items.

The price of kerosene, which was Tk 18 per litre in the morning, doubled by evening. The price of fuel wood also witnessed a similar increase.

Bakeries using gas-fired ovens ran out of normal productions causing a short supply of breads. Whatever had been available at shops were sold out by early evening.

Baffled housewives gathered twigs, branches of trees and dry leaves, newspapers, cartons, discarded wooden boxes and whatever they could lay their hands on to cook family meals in makeshift stoves with bricks.

It was the same story for the chefs of Sonargaon, Sheraton and other fancy to ordinary restaurants, where gas supplies were disrupted.

The big hotels managed with steam pressure, electric appliances, bottled gas and lining the use of their boilers since 3 pm when they were informed by the Titas Gas about the disruption.

But less privileged hotels and restaurants had to do with old fashioned fuel wood, delaying their services at busy lunch hours.

When customers got jittery at delayed arrival of lunch,

A win for political process

Manik Miah Avenue and Pantha Path — within 15 days.

Anyone aware of the four-point agreement signed between the parties on January 14, 1997, knows that the content of the newly signed accord — barring the clause dealing with a meeting venue and reconstitution of a few parliamentary bodies — is just a photo copy of the 14-month old accord. In that case, one is free to say that BNP has failed to wrestle out anything new from the AL — as the latter did not need to promise anything new to make the former return to the House.

To talk about the lifting of restrictions on street rallies at Manik Miah Avenue or Pantha Path, one would just say — keeping aside the debate revolving round the justification of holding rallies on streets in an over populated city like Dhaka — that this is also not a fresh achievement for BNP. During the informal negotiations between the two sides over the last couple of months, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim had clearly hinted that the government was ready to lift restrictions on street rallies on any of the two venues — Manik Miah Avenue and Pantha Path. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, on the other hand, had been insisting on three places, including the street in front of the Jatiya Press Club. Given the March 2 accord, the AL did not

compromise its stance on meeting venue. Besides, if a meeting venue like Manik Miah Avenue or Pantha Path is given for holding rallies — the AL is also free, like the BNP, to take the same political advantage, if there is any.

On top of it all, the BNP negotiators have even contradicted an official stance of the party, regarding two of its MPs who recently joined the government of Sheikh Hasina. The party has expelled the two MPs and disowned them in public, while the agreement shows that the BNP negotiators still consider the two deserters their own people. According to the agreement, all the 113 BNP legislators would be accommodated in the 35 standing bodies of parliament. And the 113 BNP lawmakers include the two deserters — Hasibur Rahman Swapan and Mohammad Alaudin.

Then, why did BNP give in? Perhaps, the party has realised that the people are not happy with its boycott of parliament sessions over a few demands — not directly related with parliament, or because of the increasing pressure on the party high-command by the party MPs to return to the House, or the government bids to allure the BNP legislators to desert the party, or, may be, all the said factors have compelled BNP to forge such a negotiation with its arch rival Awami League.

But there is the other side of

the coin: The AL has no reason to be complacent about its 'success'. When it is true that the March 2 agreement is just an accord to implement a previous accord signed 14 months ago — it only implies that the government, despite rhetoric, did not honour the agreement it had signed with the opposition more than a year ago.

Specifically, given the content of the agreement, the AL has made the following indirect admissions: (a) The ruling party had, at least in some cases, framed charges and allegations against the opposition leaders and activists in order to harass them. (b) In the coverage of Parliament proceedings, the state-run radio and the Television have been biased against the opposition.

The Speaker's assurance that he will conduct the business of the House with 'total neutrality' also amounts to an indirect admission that there was room for him to be more neutral.

However, it is the agreement that has exposed the said weaknesses of the AL and the Speaker, giving them a little taste of moral defeat to the opposition.

All said and done, the two contending parties have finally been able to resolve the six-month long parliamentary impasse through peaceful negotiations, and this has, perhaps, made the country's peace-loving citizens happy — at least for the moment.

Faysal Islamic Bank formally opens 'Another milestone in Islamic banking'

By Staff Correspondent

He thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Government of Bangladesh Bank for assuring fullest cooperation in the functioning of the bank.

Nassief said that a young and dynamic management team comprising local talent had been appointed in the bank. He hoped that they would promote the services and satisfy the customers.

The bank works in strict adherence to the principles of Islamic Sharia. It started operation in Bangladesh from August 1997. The bank recently introduced Roze Munafa Business Account which is a local currency PLS account for corporate and personal business.

Its financing schemes include trade financing and working capital financing in the 'short term financing group' while equity financing, project financing, Ijara financing and real estate financing in the 'long term financing group.'

Speaking on the occasion, President of the Bank Nabil Nassief said, "By opening a branch in Bangladesh — one of the largest Muslim countries of the world — the bank achieved another milestone in its long journey in recognition and promotion of Islamic banking system worldwide."

He said that as an emerging economy, Bangladesh had been in their expansion list and they would try to remain here for long for mutually beneficial business links.

"We have already demonstrated our commitment to the economic growth of Bangladesh through establishment of meaningful business relationship with some of the country's top tier business houses," Nassief said, adding that such commitments would continue in the future.

President

From Page 1

piece of *gulf* of the Holy Kaba to the President as gift.

Prince Mohammad Al-Faisal Al-Saud also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Ganabhaban official residence here yesterday evening.

Alternate diggers from the Army was sought. But the one that could do the job was in Chittagong.

Later, 100 day labourers were hired by the desperate PWD officials in the afternoon. The workers started work at around 9:30 pm with spades.

Muktadir calculated that they would require at least seven to eight hours to reach the leakage. Then it would require at least six hours for the Titas Gas engineers and technicians to fix it, provided the leak was not big or complex, he added.

He said the pipeline carried a pressure of 300 pound per square inch, big enough to cause a disaster of unimaginable scale. "But the PWD did not consult before employing workers to do the piling for the buildings," he said.

PWD officials avoided talking to the Star correspondent. But one of its engineers said they started work on the basis of a blueprint prepared by the Department of Architecture, who had prepared it on the basis of design provided by the BTY.

"We were told that the pipeline was 65 feet away from the piling site. But the assessment was wrong," the engineer, preferring anonymity, said.

The MD of Titas Gas said the company would lodge a case with Sabujbagh thana in this connection.

UNB adds: Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan has visited the spot and is keeping a constant vigil on the progress of repair. State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed also visited the spot.

A three-member high-powered committee has been formed to probe the cause of the accident. The committee is to report to the government within a fortnight.

TDP support

From Page 1

gether. The BJP also faced problems. At least two BJP allies with a total of 25 seats have said they would only support a BJP government from the outside, an arrangement that has been discredited in India.

Overnight, Telugu Desam Party leader Chandrababu Naidu, the top politician in southern Andhra Pradesh state, told reporters he has been maintaining distance from both the BJP and Congress, treating "the former as an enemy at national level and the latter an enemy in the state."

Naidu is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi tomorrow to meet with other United Front leaders.

Helping Congress gain national stature now might backfire next year for Naidu, when state assembly elections are scheduled. Naidu is already seeing indications Congress is gaining support among voters in Andhra Pradesh, and he may not want to see the party grow any stronger.

The bulk of voting for the national parliament was held over the last three weeks. Counting began Monday, and winners for all but a handful of seats for the 545-member lower house of parliament have been declared.

No party won the 273 seats needed to govern alone. According to tallies Wednesday, the BJP and its allies won 251 seats, Congress and its allies 166, and the United Front 96. The 96 United Front seats include 12 for Naidu's party.

That leaves the Congress-Front group — if it can hold onto Naidu — 11 short of a majority, and the BJP 22 short. Both were working to win support from the pool of 21 seats won by independents or smaller parties.

Jute goods

From Page 1

away the jute goods purchased with the bank's money and mortgaged to it. To stop this, the bank posted five guards hired from Khulna Security Services. But the security company, in a letter on February 16, informed the bank that the guards had not been allowed to enter the mills and they were beaten up, UB's letter said.

Later, the management allegedly in collusion with the workers broke open the warehouse of the mills and took away some 300 to 350 bales of jute sacks worth about Tk 20 lakh.

After this, the Khulna Metropolitan Police posted a 19-member force at the mills. But the bank alleged that the mill owners along with the workers are still taking away mortgaged jute goods from the warehouse.

The bank is now facing a huge financial loss as the mortgaged goods have been taken away without paying any money to the bank. If this process continues, it would also be difficult to keep the mills operative, the bank authorities said.

The bank has now appealed to the Home Ministry to take steps to recover the 'looted goods' and ensure that such incidents do not repeat in the future.

Arms surrender

From Page 1

The arms surrender ceremony was marked by a tight security, officials added.

With today's 222 members of Shantibahinini, the number of tribal guerrillas who surrendered in four phases under a peace accord with government on December 2 last year, totalled at 1947.

Earlier, in three batches of 1725 members of tribal guerrillas returned to normal life.

Silent famine stalking country : Khaleda

NAOGAON, Mar 5: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia today said a silent famine is stalking the country as thousands of people are passing the days virtually without food, reports UNB.

"People have become frustrated following abnormal price hike of essentials, including rice, pulses and onion," Begum Zia told a meeting at the Naogaon A-Team ground in the afternoon.

Criticising the government for its rhetoric, Begum Zia said the ruling party has miserably failed to ensure people's fundamental rights like food, clothing and education.

Apprehending a situation like 1974, she said people nowadays cannot sleep at night as the country went under the grip of bandits and hijackers.

The BNP Chairperson blamed the government for politicising the administration, and blocking the country's progress and development.

"Twenty-eight thousand mills and factories set up during the BNP regime are now on the verge of collapse while a large section of people are reeling under the curse of unemployment," she told the meeting.

Begum Zia said the loadshedding and soaring prices of fertiliser have appalled the country's marginal farmers.

"People want to get rid of this grave situation," she said, adding that her party has decided to join Parliament in the greater interest of the country.

She observed that the country has turned into a vassal state of neighbouring India for the ruling party's weak-knee

Demra police exhume body of new-born baby

By Staff Correspondent

Demra police yesterday exhumed the body of a new-born baby who died when her grandmother allegedly threw her from the roof of a house in the city's Demra thana five weeks ago.

Police said that the body was exhumed from Jurain graveyard and sent to the Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Demra police in connection with the incident on January 27. Later, a murder case was filed in this regard, following an investigation ordered by the Home Minister on February 24.

Arms surrender

From Page 1

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foreign policy. "Local industries are heading towards ruination as the substandard Indian goods have flooded the local market."

Begum Zia reaffirmed her party's stand to wage a vigorous anti-government movement to protect the country.

Presided over by Akhter Hamid, MP, the meeting was also addressed by K M Obaidur Rahman, Nazmul Huda, Mir Shawkat Ali, Maj (ret'd) Akhteruzzaman, MP, Mizanur Rahman Minu and Aminul Huq.

Orbis

From Page 1

workers at the same time, worked alongside 17 of their Bangladeshi counterparts and conducted a series of lectures on the techniques of nursing.

A set of educational video tapes were donated by the Orbis team members which were handed over to Dr Humayun Kabir, President of the Ophthalmological Society of Bangladesh.

The team members also donated some medical apparatus for use during the surgeries which were handed over to OSB secretary general Dr M A Hadi, Fiquar.

Orbis, with the mission of fighting blindness worldwide and sharing knowledge, has come to Bangladesh as part of their task of presenting advanced techniques of health education programme in the developing world.

Since its inception in 1982, Orbis has conducted more than 330 training programmes in 77 countries. More than 35,000 health professionals received training.

It also has saved and restored sight of more than 22,000 patients across the globe. It was the fifth visit by Orbis to Bangladesh and it plans to visit again next year at the invitation of the Minister of Health and Family Welfare.

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