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VOL. VIII NO. 68 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> CHAITRA 14, 1404 BS DHAKA SATURDAY MARCH 28, 1998 ZILQAD 28, 1418 HIJRI 12 PAGES REGULAR PLUS MAGAZINE: PRICE TAKA 9.00

Indefinite transport strike in 10 N dists

BOGRA, Mar 27: Transport service in 10 northern districts of the country came to a halt due to an indefinite strike by Bogra District Transport Owners-workers Action Committee, reports UNB.

The strike was enforced this morning as a section of transport workers in Sirajganj district damaged a number of vehicles on Bogra-Nagarbari highway following refusal of giving tolls.

President of Bogra Transport Workers' Union, Abdul Mannan Mithu said a section of workers at Chandaikona and Bhuiyanganti in Sirajganj have set up 'self-styled' check posts and are collecting tolls from Nagarbari and Sirajganj-bound vehicles.

As the drivers denied to pay the toll they damaged several vehicles during the last few days.

Protesting the attacks on vehicles, the transport owners and workers enforced the strike, he said.

The strike paralysed the communication of 10 districts of greater Bogra, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts with the capital and other parts of the country on the eve of the Eid-ul-Azha.

US business team due today

A high-level US business promotion delegation arrives in the city today on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The delegation will include President and Chief Executive of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) George Munoz, President of the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) J. Joseph Grandmason and Senior Loan Officer of the Export and Import (EXIM) Bank Rita Murrell.

It is the highest level official US business promotion delegation ever to visit Bangladesh.

The delegation members will meet with Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Finance Ministers SAMS Kibria, Energy Minister Lt-General (Retd.) Nooruddin Khan, BOI Executive Chairman Farooq Sobhan and other senior officials tomorrow.

They will also speak at a lunch at the Sheraton Hotel organised by the American Chamber of Commerce, BOI and FBCCI.

Young man shot dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Mar 27: A young man was gunned down at Kalpataru market under Daulatpur thana in the city on Wednesday night.

Police identified the dead as Jamir Hossain, 24, son of one Makkul Sheikh.

Police said a gang of four unidentified gunmen fired at Jamir from a close range while he was taking tea at a teastall at about 11:30 pm. He died on the spot.

Royal Bengal Tiger shot dead by BDR

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, Mar 27: A Royal Bengal Tiger was shot dead by BDR personnel at village Datnekhali under Shyamnagar thana on Thursday night.

The tiger was killed because it had started to enter villages and take away cattle. It used to come from across the river Chuna which separates the villages from the Sundarbans.

The dead tiger was kept at the BDR camp at Nildumur, according to a message received here.

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A colourful children's rally was held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the city on the Independence Day.

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Tribute to martyrs, fresh vow to build exploitation-free society

By Staff Correspondent

The nation celebrated the 28th Independence and National Day on Thursday with great patriotic zeal, paying the glowing tributes to the memory of the martyrs who made supreme sacrifice for the independence.

From early morning on the day, people in their thousands visited the National Memorial at Savar and placed wreaths, taking vow a fresh to translate the martyrs' dreams into reality and build an exploitation-free society.

On March 26, 1971, freedom-loving people of this country took up arms following proclamation of independence by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after the then Pakistani army launched a ruthless crackdown on the previous night, killing

innocent civilians, negating an election mandate. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was then leader of the majority party in the then Pakistan National Assembly.

After a nine-month war, Bangladesh came into being on December 16, 1971 at the cost of three million lives.

The day, a public holiday, was heralded by a 31 gun salute in the early morning. The National Flag flew atop all important public and private buildings. In the capital, important thoroughfares and road islands were decorated with miniature flags and bunting. As the sun set, the city wore a festive look with important buildings tastefully decorated with kaleidoscopic lights.

President Shahabuddin

Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths at the National Memorial at six in the morning and stood in solemn silence for sometime as the bugle played the last post in honour of the martyrs of the Liberation War.

Ministers, judges of the Supreme Court, members of the parliament, high civil and military officials and diplomats were also present on the occasion.

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairman Begum Khaleda Zia, flanked by senior party colleagues, also offered wreath at the National Memorial in the morning.

In addition to state-level programmes, different socio-

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Gunfight kills 2 in Mirersharai

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 27: At least two persons — an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir and a businessman — were killed and some others injured during a gunfight between activists of two rival student organisations at Mithachhara bazar under Mirersharai thana, 30 miles off the city yesterday evening, police and local people said.

The Shibir activist was identified as Rabiul Hossain (22), a student of Mirersharai Madrasha and the businessman, Md Alamgir (38), was the president of Mithachhara Bazar Committee.

Police said the trouble began at about 7 pm yesterday when a Shibir procession on the occasion of the Independence Day suddenly came under attack by the rival group.

The rival groups staged a chase and counter-chase and fired shots that left the two per-

sons killed on the spot and few others injured, police said.

The businessman was killed being hit by a bullet when he was standing at the bazar, police said.

The injured persons were admitted into Chittagong Medical College Hospital and the local health complex.

Shibir blamed the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League for the attack and killing. But BCL denied it.

The Bazar Committee filed a case with Mirersharai thana accusing 16 people.

Police arrested four of the accused persons.

Additional police force was deployed at the spot to prevent any fresh outbreak of violence.

Meanwhile, Shibir called a half-day hartal in greater Chittagong district on March 29 in protest against the attack and killing.

15 teachers of architecture dept withdraw resignation

By Staff Correspondent

Fifteen teachers of architecture department of BUET, who had resigned en masse on March 15 protesting a new admission rule, have withdrawn their resignation, says a press release.

They withdrew their resignation on Wednesday as the problem arising out of introduction of a new admission rule in architecture department was solved through a personal initiative of Prime Minister and Chancellor of the University Sheikh Hasina on March 23, the press release added.

Pledging all cooperation to the BUET authorities in implementing the understanding reached on March 23, the teachers said, "We hope that the Honourable PM will give directives to the proper office to take necessary steps."

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Residences for Speaker, Deputy Speaker

Tk 5.5 cr ADP money to be spent

By Morshed Ali Khan

The government has started constructing two official residences in the Sangsad Bhaban area for the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

The World Bank had earlier questioned the rationale of spending ADP funds for this. The buildings are being constructed at the open space on the

southern side of the road near the Crescent Lake on an area of 3.68 acres and at a cost of Tk 5 crore 47 lakh, PWD sources said.

A Daily Star report on August 22 last year had pointed out that the WB had questioned the rationale of a number of development projects in the fiscal

1997-1998 ADP, including construction of the two residences at a cost of Tk 4 crore.

PWD sources said the Speaker's two-storied five-bed residence cum office would be built on an area of 2.61 acres.

There are set standards for official accommodation except

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Construction work of official residences for the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker is going on in the Sangsad Bhaban area. — Star photo

Medical equipment for govt hospitals, colleges

Massive corruption in accepting tender offers worth Tk 100cr

By Naimul Haq

The Parliamentary Estimate Committee has detected "massive corruption and irregularities" in accepting tender offers worth over Tk 100 crore for purchase of medical equipment for government hospitals, medical colleges and training institutes.

Serious irregularities have been detected during examination of tender offer documents by the 10-member Committee, according to sources in the Committee.

The Committee in its report said that some of the tender offers were accepted despite being 'non-responsive'. 'Incomplete' bid offers came out to be 'substantially responsive' although those failed to submit catalogues for about 600 medical devices.

The report has been submitted to State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Amanullah. The Committee, headed by Dr Mizanul Haq MP of Awami League comprises six MPs from AL, three from BNP and one from Jatiya Party.

A bid was taken to be 'substantially responsive' although it was mentioned in it that no

services would be available after delivery of the equipment. But in the tender it was specified that 'service facilities have to be ensured through bidder's local agent.'

In a number of cases, bids were taken to be 'qualified' although there were 'major deviations' in the offers.

A bid was qualified for a certain offer despite failing to mention 'warranted performance and expected efficiency of equipment,' as stated in the clause of the rulebook.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Asian Development Bank assisted Second Health and Family Planning Services considered a number of bids 'responsive' despite the fact that those had not quoted for the specific instruments in the offer.

During examination of the documents, it was detected that 'false signatures were used to qualify for certain offers but the PMU considered those 'substantially responsive.'

The Parliamentary Committee also found that some of the bids 'failed to fulfill specifications of the tender documents

but those came out to be responsive.'

As per the tender specification, 'bid security' or bank guarantee was required to be issued or endorsed by a schedule bank of Bangladesh but in one case the bid security was endorsed by a foreign bank was accepted.

The Committee report also said that the secretary of the health ministry and the project director of the PMU abstained from giving the Committee certain information relevant to the investigation.

There are many more examples of irregularities detected by the Committee. For instance, in the tender document for an item, 'defibrillator with ECG & recorder,' it was specified that the item must have CRT display, ECG recorder and paediatric paddle. Though the specification was quoted in one of the bids, there was no mention of the specific parts in the catalogue. The offer was, however, accepted.

In case of another item, gastro fibroscope for paediatric, the accepted bid had quoted all the necessary specification in

See Page 2

Over 10000 intrude into Bangladesh from Mizoram

BANDARBAN, Mar 27: More than 10 thousand Indian nationals intruded into Bangladesh from Mizoram during the last two months, reports UNB.

Residents of Ruma thana said the Indian nationals belonging to Chakma, Tangchanga and Moró, crossed the border and took shelter in different parts of the hilly areas.

They informed that the Chakma refugees who recently returned from Tripura are patronising the arrival of the tribals from Mizoram, the residents further said.

The intruders claim that they are Bangladeshi nationals, fled to the Indian state of Mizoram at the time of 1971 war of independence.

5 killed as BDR opens fire in C'nawabganj

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 27: At least five persons were killed and about 100 injured during a clashes between BDR personnel and a mob at Sonai Chandi hat under Nakol thana in Chapainawabganj district Wednesday afternoon.

Nineteen seriously injured persons including eight BDR personnel were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

According to witnesses, a group of 32 BDR personnel led by Naik Subedar Israfil raided the Sonai Chandi hat and began to seize some cows allegedly brought from India illegally. At a stage when people resisted them, BDR personnel fired

shots to disperse the mob. Three persons Sikander, 30, of Bipukuria village under Niamatpur thana in Naogaon district, Mahbubur Rahman, 45, imam of a local mosque and van driver Khairul, 25, died on the spot. Durul Huda, 35, later succumbed to bullet injuries in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday. Another person, Harun, 40, was killed at Kuthadanga village on the same day when BDR fired on a group of people who tried to resist them while returning to barracks, witnesses said.

Abdul Qader, 30, Azahar Ali, 35, Maqbul, 25, Mattur, 14, Raghunath, 28, Sirajul, 25, See Page 2

Teenage girl gangraped in city

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage girl was gangraped inside an abandoned house in Shahidiagar area under Lalbagh thana in the city Wednesday night.

Police said, brandishing arms, three hoodlums intercepted the 16-year-old newly married girl and her sister-in-law on the Beribadh at about 5:30 pm and took them to the house. The girls were returning from their relative's house at Balughat. The sister-in-law managed to escape. The hoodlums left the victim in the house Thursday morning.

The victim lodged a case with Lalbagh police under the Women and Children Represent-

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The Daily Star

World Cup Quiz '98

BEGINS TODAY

Win Fabulous prizes from
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HOW TO PARTICIPATE

From TODAY, The Daily Star launches a series of Quiz competitions on World Cup soccer with fabulous prizes from the house of Transcom Electronics Ltd. There will be NINE rounds, of which the first will be an extended round because of Eid-ul-Azha, the second to fifth will be fortnightly rounds and the final four will be weekly World Cup LIVE competitions. For each round a set of questions will be published in the sports page of The Daily Star for the duration of the round. Participants of all the nine rounds will automatically qualify for the BUMPER DRAW which has even more unbelievable prizes. All you have to do is TICK the correct answers, cut out the entry form and mail it (or hand-deliver) to The Daily Star, House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka 1205 before the closing date of each round.

FIXTURE OF THE ROUNDS

ROUND	STARTS	ENDS	ANSWERS MUST REACH BY	LUCKY DRAW FOR PRIZES
Quiz 1	28 March, '98	15 April, '98	15 April, '98	16 April, '98
Quiz 2	16 April, '98	29 April, '98	29 April, '98	30 April, '98
Quiz 3	30 April, '98	13 May, '98	13 May, '98	14 May, '98
Quiz 4	14 May, '98	27 May, '98	27 May, '98	28 May, '98
Quiz 5	28 May, '98	10 June, '98	10 June, '98	11 June, '98
Quiz 6	11 June, '98	17 June, '98	17 June, '98	18 June, '98
Quiz 7	18 June, '98	24 June, '98	24 June, '98	25 June, '98
Quiz 8	25 June, '98	01 July, '98	01 July, '98	02 July, '98
Quiz 9 (BUMPER)	02 July, '98	09 July, '98	09 July, '98	10 July, '98

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All Prizes Courtesy: Transcom Electronics Ltd.