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VOL. VIII NO. 69 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: http://www.dailystarnews.com CHAITRA 15, 1404 BS DHAKA SUNDAY MARCH 29, 1998 ZILQAD 29, 1418 HIJRI 16 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 6.00

JS session resumes today

Parliament resumes its session today (Sunday) at 10 am after a three-day recess, reports UNB.

The House is expected to witness the introduction of much debated bill on the CHT before going for prorogation.

Four bills, including one seeking for formation of the Regional Council in the CHT to coordinate the actions of the three hill district councils would be moved into this session.

Three other amendment bills are related to the hill district councils of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

The proposed bills would give legal coverage of the CHT peace agreement signed on December 2 last year.

New land port opens in Nalitabari

SHERPUR, Mar 28: A new land port was inaugurated yesterday at the border village of Nakugon in Nalitabari thana here near the Garo Hills, reports UNB.

A local elderly politician Abdur Rashid laid the foundation stone of the new port.

Speaking on the occasion as chief guest, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury said the government has taken various steps to expand trade and business in the country.

City BNP announces action programme tomorrow

BNP city convener Sadeq Hossain Khoka MP will announce next action programme tomorrow to protest crisis of power, water and gas, price-hike of essentials and deterioration of law and order, reports UNB.

The action programme will be announced at a press conference. This was decided at a meeting of the BNP's City Convening Committee held at the party office yesterday.

The meeting was attended, among others, by City Joint Convener Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, Ekhas Uddin Molla, Abdul Wadud Master and other city leaders.

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Children looking at a painting depicting the surrender ceremony of Pakistani occupation forces on December 16, 1971 at Muktijuddha Mela on Shishu Academy premises yesterday. —Star photo

Law minister on proposed CHT Bill

It's just a local govt bill, no need to amend Constitution

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru has said that the proposed Bill on the CHT peace accord will not require any amendment to the Constitution.

Talking to UNB he said this is just a local government bill prepared within the meaning of Article 59 and 60 of the Constitution and it will be passed by Parliament in a simple majority.

The Law Minister refuted BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia's contention that the government is planning to amend the Constitution to legitimise the accord.

"No, the government has no

such plan since the Bill will not require any amendment to the Constitution," Khasru said.

Asked whether autonomy was granted to the CHT under the proposed Regional Council, he said the Regional Council will just be a coordinating body of the three hill district councils of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban.

Khasru categorically said the planned Regional Council will not hurt the unitary character of the State.

He said the preamble of the peace accord clearly stated that the National Committee on the CHT and the PCJSS signed the agreement within the ambit of

the Constitution keeping allegiance to state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The accord, he said, was signed to uphold political, social, cultural and economic rights of all citizens in the CHT and expedite socio-economic development there and preserve respective rights of all citizens of Bangladesh.

The Law Minister said Article 9 of the Constitution says that the State shall encourage local government institutions, composed of representatives of the area concerned.

He referred to the Article 59 (2) which says about the function of the Regional Council.

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Gorai re-excavation to save Sundarbans from salinity

KUSHTIA, Mar 28: The government has taken up a 250 million US dollar plan to revive the river Gorai, a 200-mile (320-km) lifeline to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, officials said here on Thursday.

Re-excavation work will start in June next.

"We are planning to re-excavate the river to restore life to it during the dry season so that it can carry the vital sweet water to the Sundarbans from the Padma," Atiar Rahman, Director of Water Development Board, said.

The Gorai dries up in the

summer when the water level at Padma drops alarmingly, leaving the forest and its wildlife at stake in 6,017-km area of the Sundarbans, designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO last year.

Hopes revived following December 12, 1996 when Bangladesh and India signed a 30-year treaty to share the Ganges flow during four dry months every year, beginning in January.

A meeting of aid agencies and donors earlier this month pledged to Bangladesh the 250 million dollar fund for regeneration of the Gorai, they said.

"This is purely a stop-gap arrangement before the permanent augmentation of the Gorai could be achieved," said Arifur Rahman, a water ministry official.

The Gorai regeneration plan envisages "capital dredging for two years and maintenance dredging afterwards for two to three more years," Rahman told The Daily Star.

The re-excavation of the Gorai has become imperative since the river is unable to prevent the salinity extending its grip on the southwestern part of the country and threatening the

See Page 12 Col 4

Vajpayee wins trust vote by narrow margin

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who compromised his party's Hindu nationalist ideology to come to power, today won a crucial parliamentary vote of confidence by a narrow margin, reports AP.

The last minute support of a southern regional party with 12 lawmakers and the abstention of two smaller groups from northern India helped Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition scrape through.

Two hundred and seventy-four lawmakers cast their votes in favour of Vajpayee and 261 voted against his government.

The announcement of the results were accompanied by loud thumping and cheering.

The wafer thin majority indicated how vulnerable the government was to pulls and pushes by its supporters. Already an ally has said its support can not be taken for granted and will be dependent on the functioning of the government.

The opposition Congress party is preparing to make its bid to form the government

should Vajpayee ever falter.

A two-day debate preceded the voting. Representatives of more than three dozen parties represented in parliament spoke for or against Vajpayee's motion of confidence.

Earlier, seeking a vote of confidence to lead this diverse nation, BJP formally abandoned its Hindu nationalist platform today in favour of more moderate policies.

"The BJP manifesto is not applicable to this government," BJP president L K Advani, a hardliner within the party, said during a debate that has focused on the more radical aspects of the BJP's campaign manifesto.

The BJP, Advani said, would adhere to the more moderate goals spelled out in a governing agenda it drafted with its 19 coalition partners.

As the second day of debate on the confidence motion opened in parliament this morning in New Delhi, TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu met with his party's other decision makers in Hyderabad, capital of the southern state of Andhra

See Page 12 Col 8



A B Vajpayee

Foundation of M A Hannan Int'l Airport laid

CHITTAGONG, Mar 28: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation of M A Hannan International Airport here this morning, reports UNB.

"Our government has taken initiative for modernisation and expansion of this airport responding to the need for improved communication as well as economic development of the people of this region," she said.

The Prime Minister was unveiling the plaque of the second largest airport, named after a veteran political leader, M A Hannan, who first aired the "Proclamation of Independence" from Chittagong on March 26, 1971, on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

See Page 12 Col 7

FDI: Law & order, uninterrupted power supply pre-conditions

Foreign direct investment (FDI) can not be attracted without ensuring law and order and uninterrupted power supply in the country, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said here yesterday.

Abul Hasan made the remark while he and Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Zillur Rahman were taking part in the "meet-the-people" programme at the central office of Awami League that resumed after a long

See Page 12 Col 2

Dacoits kill night coach passenger in Magura

JHENIDAH, Mar 28: A night coach passenger was stabbed to death and another received injuries and valuables worth about Taka one lakh was looted by armed dacoits in a Khulna-bound night coach of Druti Paribahan in the early hours of today.

Police said, six armed dacoits, who were travelling in the guise of passengers took control of the coach at gun point near

See Page 12 Col 2

Gold worth Tk 4 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport recovered gold chains worth about Tk 4.03 lakh from a passenger of Bangladesh Biman flight from Singapore yesterday afternoon.

Airport sources said customs officials, on suspicion, challenged the passenger of the BG-071 flight when he was crossing the Green Channel at about 4:40 pm.

The officials ascertained the existence of gold inside a CD set after scanning the luggage of the passenger. Later, they recovered the gold chains weighing about 859 grams from inside the CD player.

A departmental case was filed with Customs House in this regard.

Reckless bid to overtake 9 killed as buses fall into ditch

By Staff Correspondent

At least nine persons including a child and four women were killed and about 50 people injured when two buses, trying to overtake each other, fell into a roadside ditch at Shanarpar under Siddhirganj thana in Narayanganj on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday.

Witnesses and survivors said both the passenger-packed buses rolled down and overturned into four feet water of the ditch with a big bang as the drivers were driving the vehicles recklessly to overtake each other. The accident took place at about 11:30 am.

Four of the victims were identified as Jotsna Begum, 25, a resident of Matlab, Farhad, 2, son of Abul Hossain, Golam Sarwar, 18, and Amarata, 65. The five others could not be identified till last night.

Three of them died on the spot, four died on way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and two died soon after admission to the hospital, our Narayanganj correspondent reported quoting fire brigade personnel and police.

Among the injured 25 persons were admitted to the DMCH.

The buses, Daudkandi-See Page 12 Col 3

Business team leader says Americans interested to invest in Bangladesh

Leader of the US trade delegation yesterday expressed the hope that their visit would be an advancement towards a stronger business relationship between Bangladesh and the United States.

Talking to UNB on arrival at Zia International airport yesterday afternoon, George Munoz, the President and the Chief Executive Officer of the Overseas Private Investment said that US is interested in a stronger ties with Bangladesh as well as the region.

He said it is fortunate for them that Bangladesh has already taken policies attractive for investment.

"And we are here today because the Americans are inter-

ested to invest in Bangladesh," said Munoz.

Replying to a question, the leader of the delegation said they will have primary discussion on possible investment in the country's energy sector.

"OPIC and EXIM together are interested to build partnership with Bangladesh in the energy sector," he said.

OPIC is a US government agency responsible for supporting American private investment in developing nations. Under bilateral agreement between the governments of USA and Bangladesh, OPIC has pending projects worth about US \$370 million.

The three-member delegation

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NICVD may face crisis of life savings drugs

By Naimul Haq

The National Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) may face a serious crisis of life saving drugs any time, Prof M A Zaman, director of the hospital has said.

"We should have a reasonable stock of at least 17 life saving drugs, used for heart surgery," he told The Daily Star. "Unless we have enough stock of the drugs, we may face a crisis like that of last year."

Some of the commonly used life saving drugs are Phenyl Ephrine (Neo-Synephrine), Mataraminol (Aramin), Amrinone HCL, Diltiazem, Papaver-

ine, Glycotrolate, Xylocard (Lignocaine), Nor-Adrenaline, Esmolol and Acetubutol, he said on Wednesday.

Currently, the requirement of life saving drugs relying on donation from various sources and procurement of those by relatives of patients, he said.

Asked about supplies from the Central Medical Stores Depot, he said "The CMSD does not give any response to tenders for import of the drugs by local agents. The hospital's requirement of such drugs is too little a

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The Daily Star

World Cup Quiz '98

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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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ফরিদপুর	গাইবান্ধা
রাজবাড়ী	কুমিল্লা
পোশাখালী	নওদা
কিশোরগঞ্জ	লালমনিরহাট
টাংগাইল	ঠাকুরগাঁও
	চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ
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