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The Daily Star

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Share market scam People frustrated due to delay in disposal of cases: Kibria

By Staff Correspondent
Finance Minister S A M S Kibria said yesterday that delay in disposing of cases against share market manipulators had frustrated the people.
"People are frustrated and they have genuine reasons to be frustrated as it has been a year now since the cases were lodged. But it's a matter for the judiciary to look into and the executive authorities have nothing to do," said Kibria replying to a newsman's query whether the delay was sending wrong signal to investors.
The Finance Minister along with State Minister for Youth, Sports, and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Kader were listening to parliamentarians at the Awami League central office on the third day of ministers' "meet-the-people" programme.
Kibria also urged newsmen to project the peoples' sentiment regarding slow pace of disposal of cases.
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PM tells int'l economic seminar in city Good governance must for effective reforms

By Staff Correspondent
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has underscored the need for a radical change in our traditional approach to development planning.
"There should be a shift of emphasis from quantitative and allocative planning to indicative and policy planning," she said inaugurating an international seminar at a city hotel yesterday morning.
Focusing on the changing trends in policy planning, she said that the Fifth Five-Year Plan emphasised policies and reforms rather than targets and mere projection of performance indicators.
The inaugural session of the three-day seminar on "Adjustment and Beyond: The Reform Experience in South Asia" was also addressed by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and Dr Frances Stewart, Director, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford.
Bangladesh Economic Association and the International Economic Association are jointly organising the seminar at Sonargaon Hotel.
Underlining the need for a balance between the extreme government-managed economic development and the completely free market policy, Sheikh Hasina said "We need to find a sound mix of the government and the market that is appropriate for our own stage of development and our institutional capabilities."
She, however, noted that government's activities must be in harmony, not in conflict, with the functioning of the market economy and must not bring about distorted prices and resource allocation.
The Prime Minister believed that economic growth must be accompanied by poverty alleviation and broad-based social progress. To achieve this goal, we have adopted an export-led and market-driven growth strategy," she said.
Emphasising development of private sector for overall economic progress of the country, Sheikh Hasina said that the private sector must play a leading role in this regard.
She hoped that private entrepreneurs would also come up to invest in sectors such as education and health where government was already creating more space for them.
Giving a brief picture of economic reforms under her government Hasina said that the



QUEUE FOR WATER: Residents of Basabo and Sabujbagh areas gathered at Kamalapur Buddhist temple to collect water as there is almost no water supply in those areas. — Star photo

'Shahabuddin spent 60-70pc less than his predecessor'

By Staff Correspondent
President Shahabuddin Ahmed spent at least 60 to 70 per cent less than his predecessor to entertain guests in his practice of austerity. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.
In reply to a question from Mohammad Selim of Awami League, Tofael said the President also refunded Tk 40,000 from his Tk 50 lakh discretionary fund, allocated from the revenue budget for fiscal 1996-97.
Tofael, also in charge of the President's office, said the then President Abdur Rahman Biswas had spent beyond the budgetary allocation under different heads, including the discretionary fund of Tk 50 lakh, and the additional expenditure was covered by supplementary budgets.
The minister also produced in the House an estimate of expenditure from the President's
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Showcase on govt Lawyers allowed to meet Chetia

By SC Correspondent
The High Court yesterday by an ad interim order allowed the lawyers of Anup Chetia, Secretary General of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), to meet with him for consultation on the cases filed against him.
The division bench of the HC comprising Justice Kazi Shafiuddin and Justice Syed J R Modassir Hossain also directed the government to show cause within two weeks as to why the lawyers of Anup Chetia should not be allowed to meet with him for consultation on the cases.
Pending disposal of the rule nisi, the court directed the Superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail to allow Advocate Sigma Huda, Alena Khan and Fariduddin Ahmed to meet Arup Chetia.
Upon a writ petition filed by Advocate Alena Khan on behalf of the Society for Enforcement of Human Rights, the court passed the order.
Advocate Sigma Huda moved the writ petition, while Deputy Attorney General Mansurul Huq Chowdhury opposed the petition.

Crimes against women, children Cabinet okays proposals for stricter punishment

By Nurul Kabir
The cabinet yesterday approved a set of law ministry proposals seeking stricter punishment for those committing deadly crimes against women and children in particular and some types of terrorist activities against citizens in general.
The government will, however, require to get the Women and Children Repression (Special Provision) Act 1995 amended by parliament to give legal cover to the proposals.
Besides, four other bills to give legal cover to the recently signed Chittagong Hill Tracts accord were also okayed by the cabinet.
Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul

Changes in energy ministry unlikely to improve situation

By Sharier Khan
The removal of Noor Uddin Khan as energy and mineral resources minister and restructuring of the ministry by creating two divisions — power and energy and mineral resources — would hardly improve the grim situation in the power and gas sectors, according to officials and experts.
The President had approved the proposal to create two divisions on March 22.
Creation of two divisions would worsen the existing lack of coordination between various authorities under the Energy Ministry including those of the Power Development Board and the Petrobangla, they said.
Some 86 per cent of the power plants are dependent on gas, 8 per cent on oil and 6 per cent on hydro-power. Now division of the ministry would mean lack of regular coordination between the chiefs of the two divisions.
Many of the important decisions of the Energy Ministry regarding private investment in the gas sector were taken by the Investment Committee, with four secretaries including the Energy Secretary as members.
The Investment Committee was formed in late '96 with the aim of maximising coordination between various ministries to ensure fast implementation of private projects. But in reality, it had slowed down the process in gas block bidding procedure as well as other gas-related investment projects, they said.
"Leadership in this sector had been split in many sections long ago. By creating two divisions, the decision-making process would be slower than before," said an official.
When he was minister, Noor Uddin Khan had little role in the block bidding process while the energy secretary was vested with more power, observed a source, adding, the situation was not "properly understood" by the government.
The Prime Minister's decision to increase gas supply to power plants by decreasing that to fertiliser factories in peak hours and to implement "load management" may be "temporarily fruitful" if the authorities concerned maintain
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Strike, barricade by jute, textile workers today

By Staff Correspondent
Jute and textile mill workers both in public and private sectors will observe a day-long strike and a rail-road barricade programme in the mill areas throughout the country today, according to a press release of Patkal Sramik-Karmachari Federation and Suta-Basthrakal Sramik Federation.
The two federations called the strike demanding formation of fifth wages commission and immediate implementation of their eight-point and six-point demands respectively.
To drum up support for the strike and barricade programme, workers of different mills, organised rallies and brought out processions in industrial areas last night.

Boy rescued from alleged kidnapper

By Staff Correspondent
Police arrested an alleged kidnapper late Sunday night and rescued a four-year-old boy who was abducted from his house at North Mugdapanara under Shabujbagh thana in the city early yesterday.
The arrested was identified as Rezaul Karim, 24, police said, adding that during a raid they arrested him from the village Azipur in Tongi thana.
Following the statement of the arrested person, police later rescued Mustafa Kamal, the victim, at about 1:30 am.
Shabujbagh police yesterday produced Rezaul before the CMM's Court praying for a seven-day remand, but the court placed him on a two-day remand.
Meanwhile, police were searching for the persons with whom Rezaul, in the guise of relatives of the victim, took the child out of his house Sunday morning.
Kamal's parents were not at home during the incident. Later, his parents received a letter from the kidnappers demanding Tk 2 lakh as ransom.

Top economist tells The Daily Star Basic edn, vocational skills need special attention

By M Anwarul Haq
Bangladesh is way behind other South Asian countries in its spending on education. It needs to increase its expenditure on basic education and for the development of vocational and technical skills.
This was stated by Dr Mahubul Haq, an internationally reputed economist who originated the UN's Human Development Index, in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday.
"By investing more on education and stressing on vocational skills, Bangladesh has the potential to be the largest exporter of skills involving high technology like software, informatics, bio-technology, electronics and fibre optics," he said.
Dr Haq, who was the chief architect of UNDP's Human Development Reports from 1989 to 1995, is presently the President of the Islamabad-based Human Development Centre in South Asia.
The second report prepared by the Centre on the South Asian region would be released Thursday.
Quoting selectively from the forthcoming report, Dr Haq said that Bangladesh is spending the lowest on the education sector among all the South Asian countries. Although it earmarked 2.3 per cent of the national income for the education sector in 1993-94, raising it from 1.2 per cent earmarked in the First Five Year Plan period, its spending on education sector is the lowest among all countries of the region. India spends 3.8 per cent of the national income, Sri Lanka 3.2 per cent, Nepal 2.9 per cent while Pakistan spends 2.7 per cent of its GNP. Dr Haq informed.
The sheer number of illiterates reflects the magnitude of the problem. Bangladesh has, according to current estimates, nearly 45 million illiterates who cannot read or write. Out of every five adults, three are illiterate, which is 62 per cent of the adult population, while four million children remain out of school," Dr Haq pointed out.
The quality of education in many schools is extremely poor. Due to lack of sufficient teachers, the pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level is 71, the highest in the region, which greatly affects the quality of education.
What is most appalling and a matter of concern is that the country's policy planners have not realised the importance of technical education, he said.
"Less than one per cent of primary school children enrol in vocational and technical schools. Over half of them drop out before completing their courses, and less than one-third who graduate find a worthwhile job, he added.
"This is a technological nightmare," Dr Haq observed. "Bangladesh cannot compete successfully in the 21st century with such little technical education."
While 14 per cent of educa-
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Dr Mahubul Haq

Justice indeed!

By Staff Correspondent
An unfortunate microbus driver of a garments factory was forced to pay a 'fine' of Tk 1000 because a state minister's car hit the microbus from behind in the city's Bangla Motor area at about 4:15 pm yesterday.
According to witnesses the microbus driven by Nuru Mia was going towards Hotel Sheraton and slowed down to give way to an ambulance at the Eskaton intersection. At that time, the state minister's car hit it from behind. As a result, the rear of the microbus as well as a front side-light of the VIP car were damaged.
A shaken Nuru Mia approached the occupant of the car — State Minister for Health Dr Amanullah — and begged for justice. According to Nuru, the minister assured him that things would be settled as per the law of the land.
Meanwhile, an on-duty police sergeant from Bangla Motor intersection appeared there. Nuru Mia said two companions of the state minister got off the VIP vehicle and asked the sergeant to book the driver 'immediately'. The VIP car then drove away.
The sergeant held Nuru and two passengers of his vehicle by the road until the state minister's driver returned to the spot an hour later with an empty car.
The sergeant then proposed a 'deal' to settle the matter. "Why go for legal tangles when you
See Page 12 Col 3

Three raped in city

By Staff Correspondent
A widow, mother of one child, was gangraped and a teenage girl was violated in the city on Sunday, police said yesterday.
In another incident, a housewife, also mother of one child, was gangraped Friday night.
Police said the 20-year-old widow, a resident of a slum at Noyatola in Demra area, was raped by eight persons at a mess at North Jatrabari Sunday night.
The victim is now under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.
Police arrested two young men and a teenage girl in this connection. They are Abul, Salam and Rupa.
Quoting the FIR, police said Rupa, a neighbour of the victim, had taken her (the victim) to the mess on the plea of borrowing some money from a person there and escaped leaving her there. Inmates of the mess kept her confined there from about 5:30 pm to 11 pm and gangraped her, police said.
The victim then went to Motijheel thana and made a complaint. Police took her to the DMCH and informed Demra thana about the incident.
Demra police arrested Abul, Salam and Rupa, all named in the FIR, yesterday morning and produced them before the CMM's Court the same day. Police prayed for seven days' remand.
The Court placed Abul and Salam on two days' remand and sent Rupa to the Dhaka Central Jail.
In another incident, one Latif lured an 18-year-old girl to a house at Madhya Piterbagh in Mirpur at about 6 pm Sunday and violated her, Mirpur police said.
Police arrested Latif in the early hours of yesterday following filing of a case with Mirpur thana by her elder sister under the Women and Children Repression Act. The girl used to reside with her sister and sister-in-law.
The housewife, a 20-year-old woman, was raped by three persons when she was sleeping with her child at her house in the Third Colony area in Mirpur Friday night. Her husband
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Govt trying to impose accord on 'jumma' people : PCP

By Special Correspondent
A two-day delegates' conference of the Pahari Chhatri Parishad (Dipty), which ended on Sunday at Maischhari in Khagrachhari district, demanded immediate release of all of its activists including Sanchoy Chakma, an immediate past president, a press release said here yesterday.
In a resolution the organisation expressed concern at what it said government's repression and arrest of its members to impose the peace agreement on the 'jumma' people, violating freedom of expression and democratic culture.
The conference also decided to call off its 'indefinite' barricade programme in the Chit-
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Bengali officials asked to vacate quarters in Khagrachhari

KHAGRACHHARI, Mar 30: Resentment is growing among the Bangalee officials working in the district as most of them have been asked to vacate the quarters by April 10, reports UNB.
An order has been issued by Executive Engineer of the Parbatya Chhatragram Development Board Mohammad Shahjahan on March 25 to vacate the quarters.
Shahjahan, who is also member-secretary of the Board for quarter allotment committee, has asked the government officials, especially the Bangalees, to vacate their quarters by April 10, the day after the Eid-ul-Azha.
Sources said the Executive
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Gold bars worth Tk 2.4 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
The customs authorities at the Zia International Airport recovered gold bars worth about Tk 2.42 lakh from a passenger of a Saudia flight from Saudi Arabia yesterday morning.
Airport sources said customs officials seized gold included two ten tola bars and six five tola bars which were concealed inside a packet of cigarette.
As the passenger crossed the green channel, customs officials, on suspicion, challenged the passenger of the Saudia flight from Riyadh which landed at ZIA at about 9:30 am.
While searching his body, customs officials found the cigarette packet in his coat pocket. A departmental case was lodged with Customs House in this regard.

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Bangabandhu Murder Case 1st Bengal Lancer was disbanded after Aug 15 incident, says IO

One hundred days of hearing of the Bangabandhu murder case in the District and Sessions Judge's Court passed off yesterday with cross-examination of the investigation officer by a defence lawyer, reports UNB.
Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, the counsel for Lt Col (ret'd) Syed Farooq Rahman, continued questioning prosecution witness No 61 Abdur Kahhar Akhand for the fifth day.
Replying to queries, Kahhar told the court that no witnesses to the account of ammunition of the 1st Bengal Lancer were available as it (Bengal Lancer) was disbanded after the August 15, 1975 incident.
According to the prosecution witnesses, members of the 1st Bengal Lancer and 2-Field Artillery took part in the operation in which Bangabandhu along with the members of his family was killed.
Farooq who is facing the trial along with four other accused was the Acting Commanding Officer of the 1st Bengal Lancer while his brother-in-law Major Khandaker Abdur Rashid was the Commanding Officer of the 2-Field Artillery. Rashid and 13 other accused remained fugitives.
The witness agreed with the defence that there was a witness to the account of ammunition of the 2-Field Artillery.
"But no witnesses were produced for the account of the 1-Field Artillery in Comilla as we didn't feel its necessity," the IO said.
The artillery unit had taken over the security duty of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from 1st Bengal Lancer two weeks before his assassination.
The prosecution witness replied in the negative when asked if he had taken account of the ammunition used on the fateful night after visiting the cantonments of Dhaka and Comilla and the Ordinance Factory. "I sought the account from the DGFI," he said.
The witness told the court that none of the accused in the case has deserted the army. "Accused Lt Col Muhiuddin was arrested on November 18, 1996 when he was on LPR (leave preparatory retirement)," he said.
Replying to a query, the IO said that there are moving pictures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Col Farooq and Col Rashid in the video tape of Granada Television submitted to the court.
He denied a defence suggestion that the video tape was manufactured after submission of the charge-sheet. "It (video) was preserved in an air-conditioned room in our office and not submitted with the charge-sheet as the print might be damaged."
The court was adjourned till this morning.

BCL gheraoes DU VC's residence

Students of Zahurul Haq and Sallimullah Halls of Dhaka University gheraoed the residence of the Vice Chancellor, protesting the raid on Zahurul Haq Hall early yesterday, reports UNB.
Witnesses said Feroz Ahmed Moni, a resident of Mohsin Hall, was injured in front of the Zahurul Haq Hall as he fell into a manhole nearby the hall.
But the activists of Ratan group, a faction of pro-Awami League Chhatra League, complained to the VC that Moni, a BCL activist of Zahurul Haq Hall, was beaten up by the rivals.
Following the complaint, police raided the hall, a stronghold of rival Shamim group of BCL, and arrested their supporter Saroj.
Protesting the incident, the BCL activists from the two halls staged demonstration in front of VC's residence.
Meanwhile, the activists of Ratan group claimed that Feroz was wounded in an attack by their rivals.
They also filed a case with Ramna police against six persons, including Saroj.

City BNP to stage sit-in near WASA, DESA, BTW

By Staff Correspondent
Dhaka city BNP yesterday announced an action programme to "free the city dwellers from bad governance and unbearable living condition."
In a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club, the unit's convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, announced the action programme saying, "security, living, rights, peace and lives of the city's 80 lakh people are at stake today."
He said the party will stage sit-in demonstrations in front of WASA, DESA, BTW, and Nagar Bhaban premises from Thursday demanding adequate civic facilities for the city dwellers.
The vital components of civic amenities such as water, electricity, gas, environment and security are today in shambles in the city, he added.
"After the present government came to power the local government minister and the mayor had announced that they would present a new Dhaka
within the following June," Khoka noted. "But the following experience has been bitter. Tax, water, electricity and gas prices have been increased. With deteriorating law and order situation there was this added crime of child rape."
Khoka also attacked the role of BTW and said, "the BTW has become a centre for television family and party affairs."
When asked why the BNP government had failed to give the pledged autonomy to BTW during their five-year rule, he replied that BNP had always considered it a national institute rather than a family one.
He announced that demanding an end to city's water crisis the party would organise procession in every ward on March 31. And on Thursday, a sit-in demonstration would be held in front of the WASA Bhaban.
In the second phase, a sit-in demonstration would be held on April 19 in front of the DESA office at Abdul Gani Road
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