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Let's make things better



Prof Razzak, Shawkat Osman still in coma

Condition of National Professor Abdur Razzak and eminent writer Shawkat Osman, who were in coma, remained unchanged yesterday, reports UNB.

Prof Abdur Razzak was admitted to the Cardio Hope Heart Centre at Gulshan 1 on Thursday. He has been suffering from asthma and old age ailments.

Prof Razzak was being given oxygen and liquid food through pipe.

Shawkat Osman was undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after he suffered a massive cerebral infarction on March 29.

CMH sources said octogenarian Osman is now under treatment at the intensive care unit (ICU).



People are leaving the capital to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha with their near and dear ones at their village homes. — Star photo

BNPPP meets April 11

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party (BNPPP) will be held on April 11 at 7 pm at the Opposition conference room in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, said a press release.

BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting.

The current session of the parliament is scheduled to resume on April 12 after an eight day recess on account of Eid-ul-Azha.

The BNPPP meeting has been called to discuss, among other issues, the government move to pass four bills accommodating the CHT agreement, party sources said.

President assents to 4 bills

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to four bills passed during the current session of the Jatiya Sangsad, a Sangsad secretariat press release said, reports BSS.

The bills are: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Bill, 1998, the Pourashava (Amendment) Bill 1998, the Private University (Amendment) Bill, 1998 and Auditor and Comptroller General (Remuneration and Special Rights) Bill-1998.

Power plants

From Page 1
overall power situation and various aspects of power generation.

Hasina, who chaired the meeting, stressed the need for effective maintenance and operation in the power sector. She particularly called for proper maintenance of the old power plants.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the plant monitoring should be accelerated and directed the officials concerned to issue prior notice before going for loadshedding.

It was also decided in the meeting that private sector will be allowed to set up 10 megawatt power plants in the REB and DESA areas.

State Minister for Energy Rafiqul Islam and concerned officials were present at the meeting held at Prime Minister's Secretariat.

Rafiqul Islam yesterday paid surprise visits to Siddhirganj steam turbine station at the outskirts of Dhaka and Haripur gas turbine station.

During his visits the state minister talked to engineers and technicians about the current production situation and management of the stations.

Hajj today

From Page 1

Hajj by circling the Holy Kaaba — the grand mosque in Makkah which Muslims across the world face to pray — seven times.

Pilgrims see Hajj is their most moving spiritual experience.

The two million pilgrims will spend tonight at the tents in Meena. Hajj reaches its climax tomorrow when the pilgrims, chanting 'I have answered your call, Allah. There is no Allah but you', go to Mount Arafat where Prophet Mohammad (SM) gave his last sermon 14 centuries ago.

At dawn on Tuesday pilgrims head back to Meena and then to Makkah, marking the first day of Eid-ul-Azha when Muslims slaughter sheep or other animals and donate the meat to the poor.

Saudi officials said 700,000 sheep and more than 20,000 cattle and camels would be sacrificed by pilgrims this year.

Up to one million pilgrims have flocked to Saudi Arabia by air, sea or land from some 100 countries for the centuries-old Hajj. The other million are Saudis and foreigners living in Saudi Arabia.

The Hajj has so far been free of political controversy. During the 1987 Hajj, 402 people, mostly Iranians died in clashes during a rally organised by Iranians in Makkah against the United States and Israel. Iran boycotted Hajj for three years afterwards.

Set up pvt hospitals for people's welfare: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the philanthropists to set up private hospitals for providing medical services and contributing to the welfare of people, reports agencies.

Inaugurating the 'Ad-Din' Hospital at Maghbazar in the city yesterday morning, she said, 'This, however, should not be done for business interests only.'

Hasina called for united and appropriate efforts to reduce deaths of children and mothers by creating awareness and through enhanced medical services.

'The child and maternal mortality rate in Bangladesh is still alarming, three women die every hour due to pregnancy and childbirth related problems,' she said.

Ad-Din, a voluntary organisation, was established in early 80s for rehabilitating the orphans and with the programme of maternal and child health.

The Dhaka branch of Ad-Din Hospital is established at the Child Nutrition Unit, managed by Save the Children (UK), to extend services to poor mothers and children.

Hasina said a large number of children meet untimely death every year due to various diseases, including pneumonia, jaundice and malnutrition.

'But these valuable human lives can be saved through creating awareness and enhancing medical services to them.'

The present government is committed to improve the healthcare system, she said adding 'we are going to announce a new health Policy very soon aimed at ensuring healthcare facilities for the common masses.'

The Prime Minister said the government has increased allocation for the health services and also keeping up its effort for the expansion of maternity and child healthcare system.

With a view to improving the quality of child and maternity services, obstetrics programme was initiated last year in five thana health complexes in the first phase on an experimental basis, she added.

Hasina said prosperity of a nation largely depends on ensuring good health of the people, especially mother and children. 'Our children are our future and, therefore, the mothers of the children deserve special attention.'

She said that in the 5th Five-Year Plan, the government has set a higher target for the development of maternity and child health.

State Minister for Health Prof M Amanullah, British High Commissioner in Dhaka David C Walker, Executive Director of Ad-Din hospital Dr Sheikh Mohiuddin, Health and Population Consortium Project Manager Anthea Mulakala, Save the Children programme director Simon Mollison and Dr MA Sabur also addressed the function.

BNP team meets Speaker

From Page 1
Opposition Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Barrister Nazmul Huda.

The Speaker, however, could not be reached for comment.

The issues that came up for discussion included government's attitude towards the opposition in resolving CHT problems, fate of the four point agreement signed between the ruling Awami League and BNP on March 2 last and the party's stance on the two MPs inducted into the Cabinet.

Speaker Chowdhury is learnt to have assured the BNP delegation that he would look into the matters.

The BNP delegation complained to the Speaker that the ruling party had already undermined a recent understanding reached with the Opposition at the JS Business Advisory body on March 29 last that a general discussion would be held in parliament to find out ways to resolve the CHT problems.

The BNP leaders told him that the government had already sent copies of the four bills seeking legal cover to the 'controversial' CHT accord to the MPs, giving a clear indication that it did not want to have a general discussion on the issues. It was expected that the government would submit the bills after holding a general discussion on the issue. It was expected that the government would submit the bills after holding a general discussion on the issue, they told the Speaker.

On the four point agreement, the BNP leaders complained that the governing party was yet to give a decision on the 'framed charges' against the BNP leaders and activists, although the deadline was over on March 21. The BNP earlier gave the government a list of 'about 750 charges affecting some 25000 party activists'.

Another member of the BNP delegation told this correspondent that the Speaker had assured them that he would discuss the matters with the governing party soon.

On the party's petition seeking cancellation of membership of two BNP MPs, they asserted that the Speaker should send it to the Election Commission. The Speaker assured them of taking 'appropriate steps' in this regard soon, he said.

President on medicare

From Page 1
President said the theme is significant in many aspects.

Expressing concern over the existing awareness level of the country's health service system, the President said the medicare facilities in our country is too inadequate to meet the growing needs of the people.

'Today is the World Health Day, but question arises in mind that how much we are aware of our own health,' he told the function.

He singled out the maternal mortality as one of major causes of the present health problem in Bangladesh.

Referring to the opinions of experts, he said lack of female education, early marriage and pregnancy at early age, ignorance about proper care during pregnancy and after delivery are the major reasons for deaths of pregnant mothers.

'Such problem can be resolved easily by spreading female education throughout the country,' President said.

The President said that healthy and able manpower is the prerequisite of national prosperity while the same motherhood is the key to its success. Pointing to the grassroots level health care services under the country's health infrastructure,

Clinton greets Shahabuddin, Hasina

US President William J Bill Clinton has greeted President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the occasion of the holy Eid-ul-Azha, reports BSS.

In a message to President Shahabuddin, the US President hoped that Bangladesh and its citizens would prosper in the years to come as the nation enjoyed the fruits of its efforts to consolidate economic and political reforms.

In a separate message to Sheikh Hasina Clinton said, 'The American people join me in sending our heartfelt greetings and hope for peace and prosperity in the years ahead.'

PM to exchange Eid greetings
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will exchange Eid greetings with people of all walks of life from 10 am to 12 noon on Eid day at her Ganobhaban official residence in the city, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister will also exchange Eid greetings with the members of the diplomatic missions and representatives of different international organisations from 10:15 am to 10:45 am on the day at the same venue.

Khaleda to exchange Eid greetings
BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will exchange Eid greetings at her 29 Minlo Road official residence on Wednesday, reports UNB.

She will meet the ambassadors, diplomats and representatives of international organisations from 10 am to 10:30 am and the party members, including people from all walks of life, from 10:30 am to 11 am, said a press release yesterday.

Govt urges BNP
From Page 1
Awami League central office in the city last night.

'Let's discuss the bills on CHT in parliament and we'll prove that the peace accord was worked out very much within the purview of the Constitution,' said the Awami League stalwart who played a key role in resolving the long-drawn parliamentary impasse recently.

Nasim admitted, 'We have our weakness in resolving power supply problem. We did not succeed in 21 months. But, I must say that we took power with a legacy of huge power shortfall and it will take some more time to overcome this.'

Nasim blasted 'scophants' who, he said, were engaged in cashing in on the names of Bangabandhu, four national leaders and Russell 'We must be aware of those who utter Bangabandhu, Bangabandhu 10 times while one time is enough.'

Amanullah said that a health policy would be finalised by the end of this month. Admitting various wrong-doings in hospitals, the state minister assured of better healthcare after the introduction of new health policy.

Minor girl raped
From Page 1
Ahmed Ali of Ashuttia village in Hussainpur thana.

Azizul, who works at Shabeda's uncle's house, allegedly raped Shabeda in a bush and later left her unconscious at their house. She was bleeding profusely.

She was taken to Sadar Hospital on Saturday afternoon and shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital today. She was yet to regain her sense.

A case was filed with Sadar police.



A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for development cooperation was signed between Bangladesh and Canada in Dhaka yesterday. — PID photo

Canada

From Page 1

technical assistance to formulate regulations and procedures for the Bangladesh Board of Investment to encourage and facilitate private sector infrastructure investment in the country, especially in power, gas, telecom, roads, water, environment and ports.

Two components of north east regional water management projects, the Kalni-Kushira community development and monitoring and Dampara water management in the greater Sylhet will be implemented under the Extension of North-East Regional Water Management Project.

Earlier during talks Kibria referred to the major commitments of the government and said highest priority has been given to the achievement of high growth rate and establishment of social justice through poverty alleviation programmes. He said the 35 per cent social sector budgetary allocation in Bangladesh is the highest in Asia, at least in the South Asia.

Kibria also briefed the Canadian team on government measures taken regarding the banking sector reform and administrative reform.

Congestion at Aricha eases
MANIKGANJ, Apr 5: The traffic congestion on Dhaka-Aricha Highway returned to normal today, reports BSS.

BIWTC sources said, the three-day traffic congestion improved last night after deployment of armed police at the ghat.

The traffic system at the ghat also improved and there was no vehicle queue at the ghat today.

A total of 1602 vehicles were ferried between 6 am to 6 pm today, BIWTC sources said.

All the 26 ferries ran smoothly today between Aricha-Nagarbari and Aricha-Daulatdia ghats.

Stray incidents
From Page 1
Hartal supporters damaged the BRTC bus at Bahaddardhat area. There were chase and counter chase between police and pickets in some areas including Bakalia and Kadamtali.

Local BNP leaders claimed that some 25 party activists were injured in police attack on party members during the hartal hours.

Later, a rally of BNP city unit presided over by Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury MP demanded release of the arrested party leaders and workers and stoppage of repression and attack on the party activists.

During hartal, most of the shops and markets remained closed and all kinds of vehicles except few rickshaws stayed off the roads.

Railway sources said train communication was normal. In Chittagong port, delivery of goods was hampered as trucks did not ply during the hartal, port sources said.

ADP cut
From Page 1
the fiscal year. The achievement is 38 per cent of the total size of ADP which is four per cent less than the same period of the previous year.

The amount spent during the same period of the last fiscal year was Tk 5283 crore which amounted to 42 per cent of ADP.

The amount spent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year, the contribution of local component amounted to Tk 2890 crore while foreign aid amounted at Tk 1937 crore. Both the figures are four and five per cent less compared to the same period of the previous year (1996-97).

The contribution of local component used during the period in 1996-97 was Tk 3153 crore while contribution of foreign aid was Tk 2130 crore.

However, a total amount of Tk 3383 crore was released during the first seven months of the current fiscal year out of which Tk 493 crore remained unutilised, mainly because of slow implementation of the projects.

S Korea accepts North's proposal for talks

SEOUL, Apr 5: South Korean President Kimdae-Jung today accepted a North Korean proposal for a meeting of high-level government officials and welcomed it as 'major progress and a change' in inter-Korean relations, reports AFP.

'We will, of course, take part in the meeting. I hope it will be fruitful,' Kim said in a statement on arrival here from the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit in London.

In what appeared to be a major policy change, North Korea proposed Saturday that vice Cabinet minister-level officials of the two sides met in Beijing this weekend, according to AP.

The talks, if held, would be the first South-North Korea government contact since 1994 when deputy prime ministers of the two sides met to prepare for the first ever inter-Korea summit in London.

Deputy Prime Minister Kang In-duk immediately called a meeting of security-related Cabinet ministers Sunday to discuss technicalities and other problems related to the North Korean proposal.

In its proposal, North Korea suggested that the proposed government contact take place at a Beijing hotel to discuss possible South Korean fertiliser aid and 'other matters of mutual concern.'

Myanmar FM arrives April 16
Myanmar Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaaw will arrive in Dhaka on April 16 on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, official sources said yesterday, reports BSS.

U Ohn Gyaaw, who will be leading a four-member delegation, will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Abdus Samad Azad on promotion of bilateral relations, including economic cooperation repatriation of Rohingya refugees will be the prime agenda of the talks between the two foreign ministers. About 21 thousand Myanmar nationals, locally known as Rohingyas, are waiting to be repatriated to their homes in Myanmar. The repatriation process remained stalled for the last few months following refusal of the refugees to go.

2 hacked in city by extortionists, muggers
By Staff Correspondent
Two youngsters were hacked by extortionists and muggers in separate incidents in the old city's Lalbagh area yesterday.

Hospital sources said Abdus Shamad, 25, a resident of Rajnarayanandhar Lane was hacked by a gang of six local hoodlums as he refused to pay a toll of Tk 20,000, demanded by them earlier.

Shamad was admitted at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The gang called him out of his residence at about 9 am. They took him to Kellar More, hit him with a machete and fled away.

In the other incident, a gang of six snatchers hacked Sumon, 25, son of Abdur Rahim, and took away a gold chain, a gold ring and Tk 5000 from him at Kuarghat at about 4 pm, hospital sources said.

Occidental's PSC
From Page 1
Magurchara gas structure and there is hardly any further chance of finding a gas structure there,' said a Petrobangla source.

It is estimated that Occidental's negligent operation has damaged a gas structure worth 400 million US dollars in Magurchara.

Besides, last week's supplementary contract letter also provides Occidental a scope to recover the cost of staying stand-by in blocks 13 and 14 since January 11, after the contract had expired.

'Ultimately, Occidental's contract is being extended without any practical gain for Bangladesh,' the source noted.

Competent sources said that the government took the move under heavy pressure from the US lobbies.

He said, following the Magurchara blow-out in June last year, Occidental did not declare 'force majeure' in these blocks, which would have had

allowed the company to get some extra time to fulfil its work commitment.

It had applied for three years extension on January 6 — only 5 days before the PSC's expiry instead of the minimum six months.

Meanwhile, sources said that Occidental's operation in Bibiana under Block 12, which earlier showed no positive sign of striking gas, was showing positive results now. Occidental has drilled about 4000 meters in this location.

'Although the initial readings appeared to be negative, it now looks very positive,' said a source. 'Occidental is hopeful about striking a big gas field very soon.'

Occidental's operations so far has not been up to expectation. Besides the Magurchara blow-out, it could not complete its drilling operation in Jalalabad in the same block due to a faulty rig. Bibiana might change Occidental's operational trend in Bangladesh, sources noted.

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