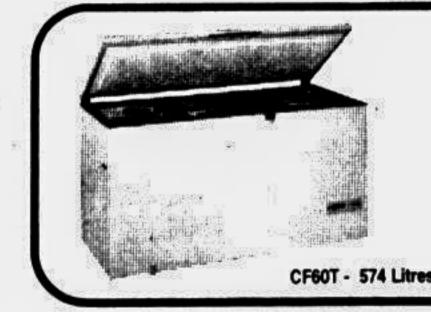
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Hartal: BGMEA move

From Page 1

the Eid". The BGMEA delegation called on Begum Zia, also Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad, at her Minto Road official residence in the city yesterday evening to request her to withdraw the April 15 dawn-to-dusk hartal across

the country. The BNP-led seven party alliance called the hartal to protest the government move to give legal coverage to the CHT

accord. The BNP chief, however, turned down the BGMEA request, saying they were compelled to go for such a programme, meeting sources said.

As the opposition leader claimed that her party was opposed to negative political programme like hartal, the BG-MEA proposed a 'political consensus on abandoning such programmes for the sake of national economy.

The BNP chief was quoted as saying in response that her party would 'consider' such a move provided the Awami

25 drown in Bihar

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: At least 25 people drowned and 125 others were missing today after a boat capsized in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, the United News of India reported, says

Officials said the boat, carrying about 150 people sank in the northern district of Samastipur some 100 kilometers (62 miles) north east of the state

capital Patna. Police official Ramesh Cathal said 23 bodies had been recovered adding that rescues were scouring the river for sur-

The victims were returning

League agreed not to go for har-tal when it (AL) would be back

in the opposition. In this regard, Begum Zia criticised the AL for 'speaking against hartal now' while it had enforced numerous hartals while in the opposition. She also pointed out that the number of hartals called by her party in the last two years was much less than that by the AL during the 'same period of time'

when BNP was in power'.
The BNP chief also claimed that they were compelled to call hartal because of the AL government's repression and antipeople activities and advised the BGMEA leaders to ask the government to stop such prac-

> One killed in Pirojpur clash

PIROJPUR, Apr 6: A clash between rival groups over land dispute here left eight persons injured yesterday — one of them died today, reports UNB.

According to police, Abdul Awal, 50, and Mohidul Islam, 25, sustained severe injuries when their rival group attacked them with lethal weapons at Purba Matibhanga village of Bhandaria thana on Sunday afternoon.

They were admitted to Barisal Medical College Hospital where Awal succumbed to his injuries this morning. Other injured persons were

Police arrested four persons in this connection.

admitted to Bhandaria Hospi-

City AL extended meet today

An extended meeting of Dhaka City Awami League will be held at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city at 6:30 pm today, re-

from a religious ceremony. ports BSS.

Pre-budget discussion

PM opens GMG airlines

were corrupt and had commit-

ted a crime. He said necessary steps should be taken to pay due respect to those who pay income tax. As a result, tax payers would be inspired and revenue income of the government will increase. This will help grow income tax culture in the country, he added.

All government employees must be brought within the tax net, the FBCCI president said adding that they must submit statement on their assets. The rate of corporate tax should be fixed at 30 per cent and 35 per cent respectively on publicly and non-publicly owned trad-

ing companies. However, he said, corporate tax should be levied on those publicly traded companies who give dividend regularly. Dividend income should be free from taxes in order to encourage private savings.

Harun said taxes on interest should be marginal. The 0.25 per cent advance income tax at

ternational cargo services," she

has undertaken plans to oper-

ate air services in all the impor-

tant parts of the country. "We

have laid the foundation of MA

Hannan International Airport

at Chittagong, which we think

steps for modernisation and

expansion of Dhaka Interna-

tional Airport to accelerate the

upgrade the Sylhet Airport to

an international level," she

said adding that projects are

The success.ul implementa-

tion of all the e projects of the

government will help expand

the private sector air services,

the private dirliners to extend

their services to the people fol-

lowing the rules and regula-

tions of the Civil Aviation Au-

thority. "You will have to main-

The Prime Minister asked

she said.

PHILIPS

FRANCE 98

also there to build up new air-

ports at Bagerhat and Bogra.

economic activities, she said.

by March of the year 2000."

will be opened for the air traffic

The government has taken

"Steps have been taken to

Hasina said the government

sources should be withdrawn in respect of exports. In order to promote exports, all export earnings should be made tax free. Cash incentives should be provided to agro-based industries, he added.

According to an FBCCI press release, NBR chairman Dr A K M Mashiur Rahman, in his concluding remarks, appreciated the FBCCI recommendations on budget and said they would consider those proposals which are conducive for trade and investment.

He said increased tariff will not facilitate industrial development, rather tariff should be imposed at reasonable levels.

FBCCI executive committee members Shafiullah Chowdhury, Obaidur Rahman, M Rezaul Mallik, Dewan Sultan Ahmed, Mir Nasir Hossain. Nazibar Rahman, Abdul Haque and A K M Shamsuddoha took part in the discussion.

NBR members S L Khan, Khawaja Ghulam Sarwar and A Sattar were present.

tain service in line with the

demand of the people and their

flight securities in accordance

with the "Standard and Rec-

ommendation Practice" of the

International Civil Aviation

the private sector should com-

promise on ensuring the flight

securities," she said adding, "We

want the passengers getting se-

sector, Hasina said the govern-

ment has plans to develop all

potential spots of the country as

a lot to contribute to flourish-

ing the tourism ensuring addi-

tional facilities for the passen-

for International Cooperation

Diane Marleau, Civil Aviation

and Tourism Minister Engr

Mosharraf Hossain, Sonali

Bank Chairman Asafuddowla,

GMG Chairman Abdus Sattar

and GMG Managing Director

Shahab Sattar also addressed

Referring to the tourism

"The domestic airliners have

Visiting Canadian Minister

curity and legal protection."

"Neither the government nor

Organisation.

tourism centres.

gers," she said.

the function.

WIN FAB PRIZES!

SEE SPORTS PAGE

NOW

She also called for ensuring

Visiting Canadian Minister for International Cooperation Diane Marleau called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

Students beaten up for refusing to pay extra bus fare

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 6: Six youths, including five students of the Jagannath University, were beaten up by bus drivers and helpers at Bhuapur Ghat today as they refused to pay extra fare, reports UNB.

The transport workers at the ghat also snatched the belongings of the students, the victims

Witnesses said the youtns came under attack when they got off the bus in the afternoon and refused to pay Tk 100 per person as fare, which is nearly three times higher than the actual fare.

During the last few days ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, transport workers are charging the passengers excess fare.

Tunnel at Barapukuria coal mine submerged

The development work of Barapukuria coal mine project was hampered temporarily as the underground tunnel got submerged on Sunday, reports

A Petrobangla press release vesterday said the people working underground in the mine have been rescued safely while the Chinese experts have taken steps to control the flow of wa-

The British consultants of Petrobangla have been supervising the work and providing necessary advice.

India to increase

From Page 1 "Modernising is important ... to achieve efficiency and excel-

India increased defence spending by 21 per cent to 10.2 billion dollars during the last budget for the fiscal year to March. The next budget is due by June.

The minister, however, did not refer to a controversial plan by his predecessor to cut back

Cattle market

From Page 1

Hazaribagh and Lalbagh points of the embankment, local mastans have set up barriers with bamboo to collect toll from the traders.

Extra police patrols were seen at different city points. In the afternoon, more buyers started to flock to the markets with a good scope for choosing sacrificial animals. Many were seen trying to make deals with traders on the city streets.

Organisers of Banani market said there was hardly any difference in prices compared to last year's. "This year, so far, the prices are quite reasonable for the average sacrificial animal," said an organiser attributing the reason to huge supply of bulls and goats. At Gabtoli, price of an aver-

age bull ranged between Tk 8,000 to 12,000. Unusually big animals also attracted crowds.

The asking price of a brown bull that looked like those of Australia was Tk 1.5 lakh. A bearded man in expensive lungi and panjabi with gold buttons offered Tk 75,000, but the seller turned down coolly. "I have raised the animal and it cost me more than one lakh taka," he

On-duty policemen said they were aware of extortion on the way. Hassle of the market organisers disappeared yesterday because there was plenty of cattle around.

20,000 jobs in the million-plus strong army and plough back the money into the modernisa-

tion schemes. An army source in New Delhi said the proposal would

not work. "A few people were laid off but the reduction plan will not be accepted because nobody wants to lose men," he told AFP

in New Delhi. Besides the heads in the budget are different for salaries and equipment and you can't really play around with the

The Indian armed forces have recently launched a publicity blitzkrieg to attract recruits following a slump in applications with most young people applying for jobs in the ucrative private sector.

Many middler and seniorlevel defence personnel have also been quitting their jobs for a corporate career.

Fernandes, who today ended a five-day tour of the troubled northeast where some 50,000 people have died since 1947 in separatist and ethnic violence said militancy was linked to

"I think economic underdevelopment is the root cause for the growth of insurgency and the feeling of alienation... only through negotiations will all these problems be solved."

35 workers injured in roof collapse

By DMCH Correspondent

At least 35 people were in-jured when the roof of an underconstruction building at Sonar gaon collapsed yesterday noon. The three-storey building is near Sonargaon Panam Mu-

All the injured are construction workers. Five of them were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Deportation from Malaysia: Most are 'victims of circumstances'

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 6: Some 1,000 Bangladeshis in Malaysia today anxiously awaited news of their fate amid reports they were to be deported as part of a campaign to rid the country of illegal immigrants.

Mousharraf Hossain, coun-

sellor at the Bangladesh High Commission here, told AFP the deportation was in line with Malaysia's regular practice to send home illegals.

"It may, however, take longer than a week because we have to interview these illegals to ascertain their nationalities before we issue travel permits for them," he said. An official at the commis-

sion said some 700 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants were repatriated in batches in December, with priority for those who could afford to pay their own fares home.

Immigration Director-General Aseh Che Mat said over the weekend 1,029 Bangladeshis detained at the country's eight detention camps would be flown to Dhaka by national carrier Malaysian Airline.

The government is to bear the expenses of 730 ringgit (192 dollar) per person, a rate which is 44 per cent lower than the normal price.

Bangladeshis are the third largest group of immigrants being detained, after those from Indonesia totalling 2,765 and from Myanmar 1.034. Mousharraf said 'it is good

that his people were being deported as most were 'victims of circumstances' who were cheated by their agents and employers.

Fire at chemical factory in Gazipur

GAZIPUR, Apr 6: A devastating fire broke out at a chemical factory in Sreepur thana today. reports UNB.

The fire started at about 8 am at the godown of ATN Chemical Factory in Rajabari area and soon engulfed the nearby dye chamber, damaging the factory building.

It took about five hours to bring the blaze under control.

Pak missile From Page 1

The test apparently was conducted at the Kahuta nuclear research laboratory, 40 kilometers (24 miles) northeast of the federal capital of Islamabad. The missile is named after a

12th century Afghan emperor Ghauri who attacked India and defeated the Hindu prince, named Prithvi, which is the name India has given to its medium-range missile.

Cabinet From Page 1

were amended to update those. Meanwhile, a four member committee headed by a Joint Secretary of the Law Ministry. Abul Basher Bhuiyan, reviewed a total of 94 laws enacted between 1948 and 1957 and suggested that 40 of those should be 'repealed,' 50 'amended' and 14 Acts should be changed in conformity with the current terms and expressions. The Cabinet approved the idea.

The Cabinet also discussed ways for resolving some problems relating to the country's ocean going fishing trawlers. According to sources in the Cabinet, no concrete decision was made in this regard.

Block Bidding

From Page 1 moderated discussions between Mobil-Petronas and Tullow for partnership in both these blocks failed to make any progress and later the government shifted its decision and invited .Chevron-Texaco to negotiate with Tullow for a partnership in Block 9. While Tullow insisted on a

50 per cent equity share in Block 9, leaving 40 per cent to Chevron-Texaco and 10 per cent to BAPEX, Chevron-Texaco proposed an equity sharing formula of 30:30:30 for the three foreign companies and 10 per cent for BAPEX.

In this situation, the government proposed Chevron-Texaco to split 45 per cent of the equity among themselves and suggested Tullow should get 45 per cent and BAPEX 10 per cent. Chevron-Texaco rejected

this proposal in early March saying that it would not be economically viable for them to agree on such an equity sharing formula. At the same time, Tullow said it could go on without Chevron-Texaco in the block.

Late last month, the government considered putting up Block 9 for a fresh bid or delaying award of the block. At that time, Tullow in a letter said that the government had issued it a Letter of Intend by making the equity split formula, imply-ing that it had a legal right over the block. This claim was, however, brushed aside by the gov-

ernment. The Energy Secretary finalised the report on the basis of some recommendations by

Girl fighting for life

From Page 1 in pain with her eyes shut as doctors administered sedatives. Her dumb-struck mother was

Her father, a carpenter living at North Bishil of Mirpur Section one, said the child had been playing inside the house. But since around 1.30 pm, she was missing. "We were panicked and

sitting like a stone statue.

started looking for her around the area," recounted the girl's father. "I went to Shah Ali Dargah Government Primary School thinking that she might have gone there to play with other children. But I did not find her there. I came back home little realising that my little child was bleeding to death in the toilet of the school.

"A little later, some people came and informed us that a girl has been found unconscious inside the toilet of the school. My wife and others rushed there and found her. They carried her home. She had blood all over. just fainted at her sight. Later, my child was given a bath to remove the blood. I wrapped her up and took her in my lap. I took an autorickshaw and rushed for the hospital."

But more ordeal awaited the carpenter and the child. He first took her to a local hospital, Taslima Clinic. But the authorities refused to treat her as they said they had no doctors to attend the bleeding girl. Then he rushed to Trust Adhunik Hospital near the Dhaka Zoo. But again he was refused treatment of his daughter. The bewildered father then took the girl to a hospital near the Eidgah Maidan in Mirpur but was

turned back again.

"Only then I was advised by people to take her to DMCH. The taxi was delayed by the horrible pre-Eid traffic jam. When I reached the hospital, it was 4 pm. All this time, my child was unconscious, and bleeding. Sometimes she was groaning in pain. But she never opened her

"How could anybody rape my child?" the father looked blank after the day's trauma, "She wanted a new frock for this Eid. I promised her to buy it. I can not think she is now lying here instead of playing in my home

The father of the minor girl said that her daughter was two years ten months. However the doctor at DMCH paid she was three and a half years old.

Meanwhile, a case has been filed with the Mirpur thana and women police have been deployed in front of the intensive care unit. None was arrested till writing this report.

3 killed in N'ganj road accident

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Apr 6: Three persons including a 60year-old woman were killed and 10 injured when a bus collided head-on with a tempo at Dhakeshwari area on the Narayanganj-Demra road here

The dead could not be identified. The two others were 18 and 30 years old.

The three bodies were sent to the Narayangani General Hospital for autopsy.

Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow

A large number of people have already left the city for their village homes and many more are still leaving to celebrate the Eid with their near and dear ones.

sage, expressed the hope that the teachings of Islam and the spirit of Eid-ul-Azha would inspire people to work for unity, dignity, peace and progress of the Muslim Ummah.

message, said "Willingness to sacrifice the dearest thing for the Almighty, if necessary to get ready for self-sacrifice, is the noble lesson of the great festi-

The Leader of the Opposition wished progress and prosperity of the people and greater unity of the Muslims.

UNB adds: The government has chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the holy Eid-ul-Azha in a befitting manner and with due religious fervour.

National flags will be hoisted atop of all government

from Airport to Bangabhaban and road islands will be decorated with national flags and banners inscribing "Eid Mubarak".

Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast special programmes highlighting the significance of the day while newspapers will bring out special supplements. Special diet will be served in

the hospitals, jails, government orphanages, baby homes, vagrant and distressed welfare centres. BSS adds: In the city the main Eid congregation organised by Dhaka City Corporation will be held at the National Ei-

dgah Maidan at 8 am in case of

inclement weather the same

congregation will be held at

Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 8 am. Arrangements have also been made for women to say their prayers at the National Eidgah Maidan.

Besides, Eid congragations organised by DCC will also be held in different wards of the The Eid Jamaat of

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology will be held at its central mosque at 7 In Chittagong the main Eid

Jamaat organised by Central Eid Jamaat Committee will be held at Chittagong Stadium at 8 am. In case of inclement weather the main Jamaat will be held at Shahi Jame Mosque at 8 am. The Jamaat at Aandarkilla Jame Mosque will be

Trafficking of children

time," Ishrat said.

"According to information received, most of the trafficked underaged girl children were sold to Sonagachhi brothel.

"It is alleged that underground cells exist in Sonagachhi, which have been specially designed to hide those girls from the notice of law enforcing agencies," the CWCS president went on, quoting some sex workers who claimed of being tortured in the basement for their refusal to comply

The study also analyses reports of four national dailies on the issue from January, 1990 to September 1997.

"Demand for trafficked children has increased in recent years as they are likely to be virgins and free from HIV/AIDS," the report noted.

"Bangladesh is also a transit country for illegal migration of women and children who are ei-

ther trafficked or wish to migrate from Myanmar to India and Pakistan," the study said.

"There are as many as 18 transit points along the India-Bangladesh border through which the children and women are smuggled out of the country. The districts of Kurigram, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi in the northern part of the country and Jessore and Satkhira in the southern region are most susceptible to trafficking.

"The most advantageous route used by traffickers is the land route, followed by air and waterways. Those using the air routes usually have work permit or false family visa to travel to the countries of the Middle East.

"The traffickers are well informed about vulnerable areas and communities and households who are severely impoverished, have suffered from natural disasters or the death of

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Shamsunnahar Ahsanullah Nowab Begum President D-154

Alhaj G A Khan Advocate, Supreme Court Honorary Secretary

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Rush in banks on day before Eid holiday

By Staff Correspondent The last day before the Eidul-Azha holiday witnessed a

rush of customers to commercial banks to withdraw money. Long queues were seen in almost all the bank branches in the city as clients wanted to stock themselves up with emergency funds for the holiday pe-

riod.

mally with rates remaining at 'very normal' levels, according to banking circles. In the beginning of the day, the call money rate was as high as 20 per cent. But later, the rate gradually declined to about 10 per cent after the banks got their clearing figures and the

Despite the rush, the call

money market behaved nor-

general expectation of high call

rates proved to be false.

Market players termed this 20 per cent rate as 'nothing abnormal' before the Eid holiday and mentioned that the call money rate shot up as high as 35 per cent before Eid-ul-Fitr. This year, the demand for money was less and at the same time the commercial banks received Tk 521 after some Treasury Bills matured Sunday.

2.3m perform Hajj

The 2.3 million pilgrims, who came from some 100 countries, began making their way to Arafat on Sunday from Mina, a tent city on the plains outside Makkah.

to protect themselves from a scorching sun and temperatures of 38 degrees Celsius. The Saudis set up mist-making machines along the route to try to cool down the crowd. Some pilgrims, in a display of piety, made the 14-kilometre

journey on foot. But most were ferried in hundreds of buses and cars to Arafat. Thousands of Saudi policemen directed the In a sermon delivered at Arafat, Abdel-Aziz ben Ali al-

Sheik, the imam of the Grand

Mosque in Makkah, decried

Muslim extremism. "Nation of Islam everywhere, beware extremism," al-Sheik said. "Extremism is the fruit of ignorance and misconception. Extremists are a poisoned dagger in the backs of the Muslims.'

He did not mention specific

Muslim insurgencies but

warned: "He who kills a Muslim

and spills his blood deliber-

ately will have hell as his re-

Some of the pilgrims have waited a decade or more to come to Makkah. To keep the pilgrimage manageable, Saudi Arabia allows each country a quota of 0.1 per cent of its Muslim population.

"I applied in 1985 to come for the Hajj." said Hussein Talibian, a 70-year-old farmer from the Iranian province of Isfahan. "Every year for 13 years, 1 watched television in the hope of hearing my registration number being read out, and this

between then and now astonished him. "There was nothing here but

Host Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter. takes pride in providing for the pilgrims as a way to further its stature among the world's 1.1 billion Muslims.

It produced a moving sea of white. Many carried umbrellas

> year it was. Talibian said that he performed Hajj once before, in 1974, and that the difference

desert back then," he remembered. "There was no electricity, no streets, no water. We had to get our own water tanker from Jiddah. Now, everything we need is provided for us, almost free of charge." .

the Petrobangla.

From Page 1 followed by the weekly holidays on Friday and Saturday, will virtually be a five-day holiday.

The President, in his mes-

The Prime Minister, in her

and private buildings.

The main city thoroughfares

held at 7:45 am.

From Page 1 with the prostitutes for some-

which is considered a haven for flesh traders."

with orders.