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The Daily Star

Today's issue
16 pages

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Clinton to visit Bangladesh by year-end

By Staff Correspondent
US President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton will visit Bangladesh in the latter part of this year.
This was disclosed by the visiting US Ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson, in the city while speaking at a discussion on "Making Democracy Work in the 21st Century" at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies yesterday morning.
At one point of his written address, Richardson, who is currently on a tour of seven Asian nations including

Richardson calls on President, Prime Minister

The visiting US permanent representative to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, called on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reports UNB.
Welcoming Richardson at the Bangabhaban President Shahabuddin said Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with the United States and looks forward to further strengthening of this relationship in future.
He appreciated the consistent support of the USA to furthering democratic process and economic development in Bangladesh.

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Holiday
The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh.
Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

Inside Today

Article
Search for Stability in South Asia
Column: Panorama by Dilara Chowdhury Page 4

Supplement
Today's 16-page issue of The Daily Star contains a four-page special supplement on Pahela Baishakh Pages 13-16

Pvt cos to produce 1200mw by 2000 Power purchase to cost about \$400m a year

By Inam Ahmed and Sharier Khan

The government will have to pay about 420 million US dollars annually to independent power producers (IPPs) when they start producing electricity, according to a World Bank estimate.
However, according to a preliminary estimate by the Power Development Board (PDB), it will cost 250 million dollars a year. Electricity is expected to be generated first by a foreign company, Wartsila, in August in Khulna.
Whatever be the amount, the government is still groping from where to pay this huge money to IPPs. It may be that the payment will have to be made from the national exchequer in the face of PDB's poor revenue collection.
Experts say this will lead to further pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserve and fiscal balances.
It is expected that 1200 mw power will be produced by the foreign private companies by

the year 2000 for which the government will have to pay them 35 million dollars monthly.
PDB gets about Tk 1500 crore from different government and private consumers. Of this amount, DESA alone owes Tk 1100 cr to PDB. This amount has been pending for a long period. "But PDB cannot disconnect power supply to DESA. Because that would be antagonising the government itself. Therefore, the decision regarding PDB's defaulters must come from higher authorities," a well placed source said.
The World Bank (WB) has already sent a cautionary signal to the finance and energy ministries describing the danger looming ahead from the IPPs.
According to experts, much of this crisis emerged from a single-track concentration of the government to allow foreign companies set up plants without taking into account other necessary arrangements like the terms of payment, supply of

gas and necessary model documents.
Even the much coveted private power projects were delayed by about a year on an average due to the authority's lack of experience in negotiating with IPPs and lack of co-ordination between the PDB, energy ministry and the Power Cell. The government had begun the process of allowing IPPs since 1996 and the earliest possible power supply from IPPs is likely to come in August this year.
At the same time, a sheer neglect in power generation in public sector has resulted in complications in purchasing power against foreign currency at a much higher rate than the PDB's power generation cost.
As a consequence of purchasing power from IPPs, there is a recommendation by the Power Cell to dramatically increase the existing tariff by about Tk 4 per unit. But so far,

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Investment likely to increase US praises success in three areas

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting US Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson said in Dhaka yesterday that the two sides had useful discussions on several issues including American investment potential and possibilities in Bangladesh.
Richardson said the US side eulogised the success attained by Bangladesh in the spheres of democracy, human rights and market economy.
Talking briefly to newsmen immediately after the official talks at state guest house Meghna, Richardson said they



Bill Richardson

had discussions on at least 20 topics of bilateral and international concern.
The US envoy said important discussions were held on bilateral investment. He expressed the hope that US investment in Bangladesh would mark a significant increase in the years ahead. He, however, did not give details. Without elaborating he said, "We have discussed all bilateral issues."
Sources said discussions

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Cabinet approves Export Policy for '97-2002

The cabinet yesterday approved the Export Policy for 1997-2002, reports UNB.
The approval was given at a meeting of the cabinet held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.
The cabinet also approved the proposal for avoidance of double taxation between Bangladesh and Thailand and Bangladesh and Poland.

Richardson urges Khaleda for 'good working relation' with govt

By Special Correspondent

US Ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson feels that the government and the Opposition should work 'lot more closely' for the 'sake of all Bangladeshis'.
"I urged a compromise between the government and the Opposition for a good working relation for the sake of all Bangladeshis," Richardson told newsmen after meeting Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday evening at her official residence in the city.
Replying to a question, he said he had conveyed the same message to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina earlier when he called on her.
"The United States feels very strongly about the democratic process that is moving towards a good direction, we know that will get better," Richardson said. "We urged a compromise between the government and the Opposition. This is a vibrant democracy."
About the 75-minute talks with Begum Zia, Richardson said they had a very good meeting.
"We had a great discussion, discussed a lot of issues, domestic and foreign... we are very pleased," he said, adding that he had also expressed his thanks

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Greetings



The Daily Star wishes its readers, patrons and well-wishers a happy Bangla New Year.

Pahela Baishakh today
By Staff Correspondent
Today is Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla Year 1405.
The day will be celebrated with traditional festivities across the country.
The day is a public holiday. Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate

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CHT bills sent to spl committee amid walkout

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday sent the four bills on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) to the JS Special Committee for scrutiny amid shouts, slogans and a brief walkout by the BNP lawmakers.
The bills were tabled in the House on Sunday.
The House also approved Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru's proposals for placing the special committee's scrutiny report on the bills within seven days.
The BNP legislators staged a one-minute walkout when Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury rejected an Opposition demand for allowing a discussion on the 'fundamentals' of the bills before sending those to the Special Committee.
On return to the House, they shouted at the Chair and some of them raised slogans denouncing the CHT agreement while the proposal for sending the bills to the JS Special

Committee was being approved by voice-vote.
Abdul Matin Khasru, who is also in charge of the Special Affairs Division in the Parliament, took the Speaker's permission for sending the CHT bills to the JS Special Committee instead of the JS Standing Committee on the Law Ministry, as was mentioned in the day's agenda.
The minister preferred the Special Committee for scrutinising the CHT bills as the formation of the Standing Committee on the Law Ministry was not yet completed.
According to an influential BNP leader, the party will participate in the work of the Special Committee, it had been boycotting since long, to challenge the CHT bills.
Earlier, the law minister and former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali (BNP) had a legal debate in the House, marked by uproars, on the scope for a dis-

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7-party-called half-day hartal tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A half-day countrywide hartal, called by the BNP-led Seven Party Alliance to protest the government move to implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts agreement, is scheduled to begin at 6 am tomorrow.
The government on Sunday placed four bills in the Jatiya Sangsad to implement the CHT agreement it had signed with the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity on December 2 last.
The Alliance had earlier called a dawn-to-dusk hartal on April 13 but later shifted it to April 15 and also revised it to a half-day programme.
The hartal hours was reduced because SSC examinations begin on April 16.
BNP yesterday brought out processions in all thanas of the city to drum up support in favour of tomorrow's hartal.
BNP will also bring out a

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Make hartal a success: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon the people to make the half-day hartal tomorrow a success, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, Begum Zia said the 7-party alliance including her party called the hartal to foil the government move to give legal cover to the "black accord on CHT which is against the national interest."
She said their charter of demands also include containing the price hike of essentials, prevent famine, resolve the crisis of water, power and gas supply, stop repression against women and children, improve the overall law and order situation and withdrawal of false cases filed against the leaders and workers of BNP and other opposition parties.
Begum Zia, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, said the government has led the country towards secession and division by signing the CHT accord. It is against the independence, unity and sovereignty of the country, she added.

Indians obstruct rice export thru Benapole

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 13: Two hundred trucks loaded with rice imported from India could not enter into Benapole land port today.
Sources said people are creating obstruction in export of rice because price of rice has suddenly increased in West Bengal.
Meanwhile, price of coarse variety of rice has shot up to Tk 15 from Tk 14 per kg in local markets.

Results of block bidding likely tomorrow

Star Report

The government is likely to announce tomorrow the results of the Second Round Block Bidding for oil and gas exploration participated by 20 companies in a dozen blocks.
A high-level meeting will be held today to review the recommendations on the block bidding made by the Energy Secretary and Petrobangla.
As per the recommendations, the government will invite four foreign joint venture and independent oil companies to finalise negotiations for the blocks, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.
At the same time the government would take another month to decide on the bidding

results for blocks 9 and 11.
In addition, negotiation with one oil company, Maersk Olie of Denmark, for blocks 19 and 20 will continue to sort out some "basic differences" with it before announcing this company as the bid winner.
Petrobangla experts meanwhile said that the government should re-evaluate the model PSCs before inviting the foreign companies to sign the contracts.
"Our experience with Cairn shows that we will not be able to handle all these foreign companies. We do not have enough manpower, skill and expertise," said an expert. "Worst of all, it now appears that the PSCs along with the investors' incentive package are not at all financially profitable for Bangladesh. If we go ahead and sign so many contracts now without reviewing and amending certain provisions in the PSCs and the incentive package, we would be heading towards an un-recoverable financial disaster."
Cairn, which is scheduled to supply 60 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) from late April will sell gas at 2.6 US dollars per unit to Petrobangla as per a contract and Petrobangla will sell it in the domestic market at 1.2 dollar per unit, leaving a heavy financial burden on Petrobangla.

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DSE index dips to 48-month low

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Stock Exchange All Share Price Index dipped to a shocking 48-month low yesterday.
The prime indicator of the bourse hit a new low of 618.34 points against 623.63 points on March 20, 1994 when the number of listed securities were only 154 with a total market capitalisation of Taka 2846.39 crore.
The bourse leaders attributed the slide to speculations ahead of the national

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Sammilita Sangskritik Jote organised a cultural programme at the Fine Arts Institute in the city yesterday to mark the Chaitra Sangkranti — the last day of the Bengali year. —Star photo

Rising terrorism at Ctg Army, BDR to be called in, if needed: Rafiqul

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Apr 13: Home Minister Rafiqul Islam today announced that if necessary Army and BDR would be called in side by side with police to face the terrorists in the port city.
The announcement came at a special high-level meeting at the Chittagong airport, chaired by the home minister. The meeting was held against the backdrop of recent increase in acts of terrorism and other crimes.
The two-hour meeting held from 10:30 am was attended by Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad, Chief of Army, Inspector General of Police, heads of DGF, NSI, BDR, senior police officials of Chittagong range and leaders of trade bodies.
Police officials who attended the meeting said that the home minister ordered for dealing sternly with the terrorists.
The minister ordered for arresting the terrorists irrespec-

tive of their party affiliation, the police officials said.
The minister advised them to take all necessary measures to curb terrorism and crimes and restore law and order in the city at any cost, they said.
President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce Kamaluddin Ahmed who attended the meeting suggested stern measures to root out terrorism from the port city.
Kamal informed that an exchange of views among leaders of trade bodies would be organised at the Chittagong Chamber on April 20 to initiate an anti-terrorism movement.
Tension mounted in the city following deterioration of law and order with the recent increase in killings, rampage and looting of shops.
Jewellers today observed strike throughout the country protesting killing of a jeweller on April 7 in the port city.

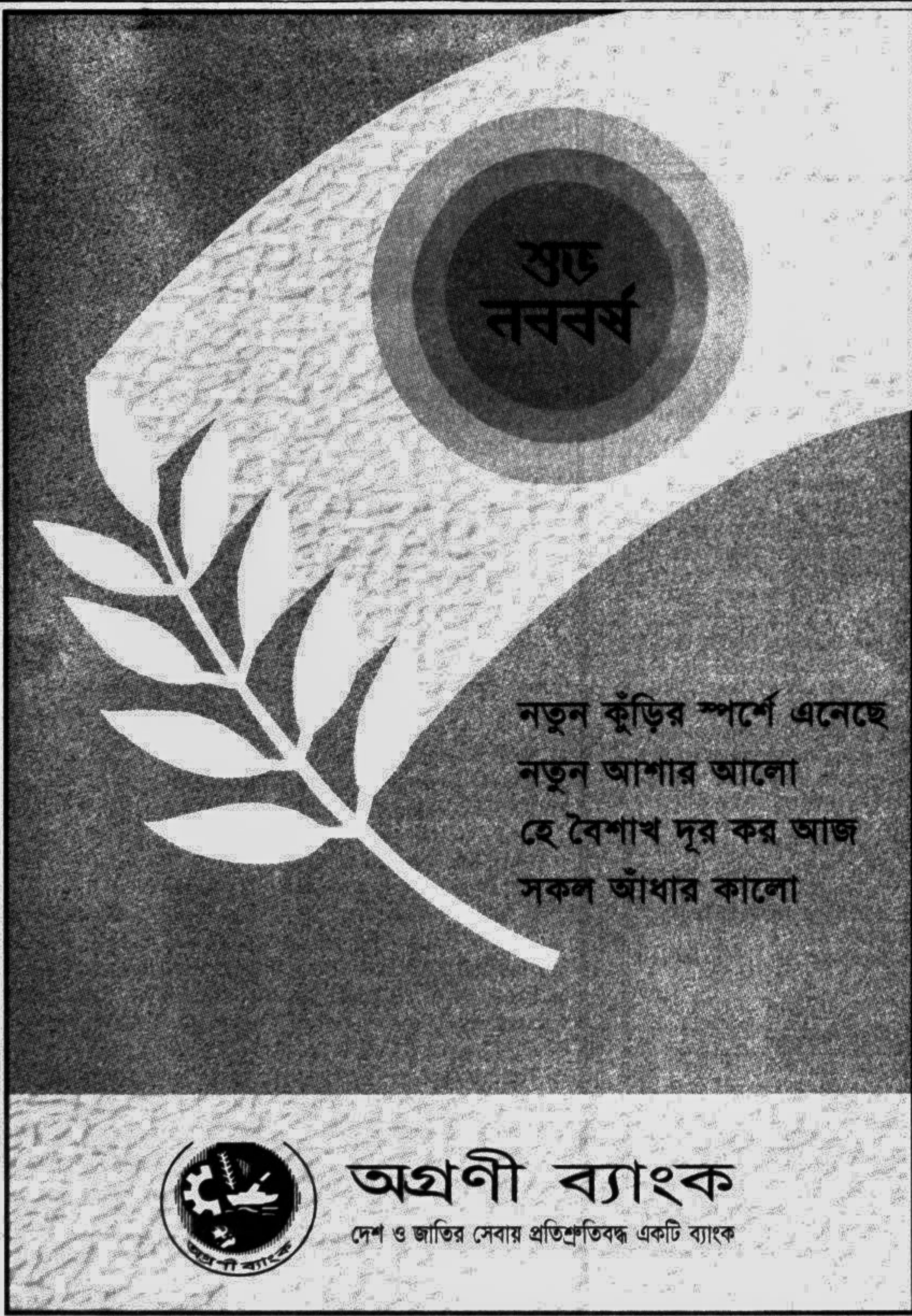
Road accidents kill 7

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons including a college girl were killed in separate road accidents in the city late Sunday night and yesterday.
Besides, two persons were killed and several others injured when a Dhaka-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch at Gashirdia under Shibpur thana in Narsingdi district yesterday.
Another person was killed and five others were injured when a Dhaka-bound microbus hit a roadside tree at Shafipur under Burichang thana in Comilla on the Comilla-Sylhet highway yesterday.
A motorcycle rider was seriously injured when his mount collided with a city-bound bus at Raghunathpur under Siddhirganj thana in the afternoon.
Both the vehicles caught fire

but the bus passengers escaped unhurt. Fire fighters from Demra extinguished the fire and took the unidentified young motorcycle rider to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.
In one of the incidents in the city, a bicycle rider and a car driver were killed when the car hit the bicycle and overturned on the Airport Road late Sunday night, police said.
The bicycle rider, Nazrul Islam, 40, and the car driver, Sادات Ali, 30, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the early hours of yesterday.
Police said Nazrul, a resident of Manikdi, was a security guard of Bangladesh Biman. Details about the car driver could not be known.
Jainun Begum, 18, an HSC examinee of Siddheswari Girls'


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নতুন কুড়ির স্পর্শে এনেছে
নতুন আশার আলো
হে বৈশাখ দূর কর আজ
সকল আঁধার কালো

অগ্রণী ব্যাংক
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সম্মানিত গ্রাহক
ও
সভানুধ্যায়ীদের
নববর্ষের
শুভেচ্ছা



জনতা ব্যাংক
ঢাকা বাংলাদেশ

পিসিআইডি-০০৪ কেস নং ৯৫৫-২০০৮, ৯৫৫-২০১৮, ৯৫৫-৯৯০৮, টেলিফোন # ৬৭৫৪০০ ক্রেডিট বিকে ৬৭১২৮৮ ক্রেডিট বিকে ফ্যাক্স # ৮৮০-২-৯৫৪৯৯৮