

Moderate tremor jolts country

A 'moderate' earthquake, which lasted 50 seconds, jolted the country's southeastern and other parts yesterday afternoon. Met office sources and residents said, reports BSS.

The epicentre of the quake was some 482 kilometre off the Chittagong city. But its direction could not be ascertained by the country's lone observatory at Chittagong.

They said the quake, which was also felt in Dhaka, started at about 2.38.37 pm and lasted 50 seconds.

There was no report of damage or casualties from any part of the tremor-hit areas.

FTI reported from Cuiwahati that an earthquake measuring 5.7 in the Richter Scale rocked different areas in the north-eastern region yesterday.

The tremor, recorded at the seismological department in the Alipore Meteorological Department in Calcutta, lasted about one minute. Met office in Calcutta told FTI.

There was, however, no report of any casualty or damage to property.

The epicentre of the quake

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Week-long strike postponed

JCD activists to be rehabilitated: DU

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal has postponed its week-long strike in the Dhaka University after a series of discussions with the university authorities.

The JCD leaders took the decision on Friday after the Dhaka University Syndicate decided to rehabilitate the displaced activists of the JCD in their respective residential halls.

The JCD was also assured that the other demands of the organisation would be considered by the authorities.

The DU Syndicate on Friday decided that the Surya Sen, Jasimuddin, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Muktiyoddha Ziaur Rahman halls of the university would be vacated today and the displaced JCD activists would be rehabilitated after checking their identity cards.

A DU press release also said that the BCL leaders had assured the Vice Chancellor of extending all possible help for successful completion of the process.

General Secretary of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Ishak Ali Khan Panna while talking to The Daily Star last night, however, said that BCL did not agree with the proposal of the Vice Chancellor.

There is no question of vacating the dormitories, it is a kind of harassment of the general students, he said.

Sources in the university indicated that the Vice Chancellor's attempt to solve the ongoing stalemate could be frustrated due to opposition from some hardline BCL leaders.

Meanwhile, the Education Minister ASHK Sadek yesterday met the Vice Chancellor at his residence.

When contacted, the minister said that he went to the university to keep himself informed of the events at the university and not for discussion on any solution to any crisis.

When his attention was drawn to the existing stalemate at the university, he said that the university was functioning normally. He said that the admission tests of the university was held yesterday as scheduled

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4 die allegedly due to liquor poisoning at Kamalapur

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons died allegedly after drinking poisonous liquor at a sweepers' colony at South Kamalapur in the city since Thursday night.

An official of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) said last night that they were investigating the deaths of four persons allegedly due to liquor poisoning in the colony during the last couple of days.

However, local people said five people died and identified them as Mal Babu, 22, Faridshi, 25, Gangaram, Ratan and Dangu, all residents of TT Para Sweeper Colony in South Kamalapur.

Of the dead, one died on Thursday, two on Friday and two yesterday, local people said. A DNC team visited the spot and seized a few gallons of home-made liquor from the colony. They were investigating the incident, the DNC official added.

However, Shabubagh police said last night that no such incident of death due to liquor poisoning occurred in that area. They confirmed the death of Mal Babu and Faridshi. According to a preliminary investigation by police, the two had

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One held on charge of firing on PM's rally in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 2: One person was arrested in connection with the incident of firing on Prime Minister's rally at Polo Ground here last year, reports UNB.

Advocate Sajjad Hossain, son of Nazir Ahmed of Garangia village of Satkania thana, was arrested yesterday by Doublinmoring thana police.

Masum, a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of the ruling party, was killed in the gunfire. The arrested man was charged with the firing during the rally, said a police press release.

CCCI programmes to protest terrorism now on May 13

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 2: Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) has shifted the date for observing the programmes protesting terrorism to May 13 from May 5.

In a press release, the chamber called for keeping the shops business houses and industries shut from morning to noon on May 13.

The chamber said that the programmes have been rescheduled due to hartal called by a student body on the same day.

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Bombs hurled at CU VC's residence

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 2: Residence of the Chittagong University's vice chancellor Abdul Mannan came under bomb attack at Kazir Dewri in the city last night, police and university sources said.

But no casualty was reported.

Police said unidentified attackers hurled two crude bombs at the residence of the vice chancellor at midnight which exploded with big bang.

Immediately after the explosion, police rushed to the spot and began investigation.

Chittagong university administration in a statement issued to the press blamed a student front for the bomb attack but it was not named.

Chittagong University administration alleged that a university bus which came to the city yesterday evening carrying teachers for shopping, was set on fire.

Chittagong University Teachers' Association in a statement issued to the press condemned the bomb attack and other terrorist acts.

The association also expressed concern over the tense situation prevailing on the campus.

Meanwhile, classes in Chit-

tagong University will resume tomorrow, university sources said.

The classes were suspended till May 2 following a clash between the activists of Chhatra League and Chhatra Shibir on Tuesday. At least 30 persons were injured in the clash.

Over 400 police were deployed on the campus to foil any fresh incident, officials said.

Attack on CU shuttle train: 10 injured

CHITTAGONG, May 2: Ten students of Chittagong University were injured when a group of young men attacked the university shuttle train Friday night, reports UNB.

The attackers opened fire on the university bound shuttle train when it reached at Sholoshahar station at about 9 pm.

Of the injured, four received bullet wounds. They were identified as Saiful Islam, Tapas Kumar Sen, both MSc final year students of Zoology Department, Baker Majumdar of Phi-

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3CHT bills to be placed in JS today

By Nazmul Ashraf and
Reaz Ahmad

The bills on the district councils of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban are scheduled to be placed in the Jatiya Sangsad when its session resumes at 11 this morning, according to sources in the JS Secretariat.

Another bill on the proposed Regional Council, comprising the three districts in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), is due to be placed in parliament tomorrow.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khairu is due to table all the four bills.

Today's Order of the Day of the Sangsad only includes the placement of the CHT district council bills, a parliament official told The Daily Star last night. A similar arrangement has also been planned for tomorrow, he added.

The process of passing the CHT bills, particularly the one on the Regional Council (RC), is likely to generate much heat in the House as both the Treasury and the Opposition lawmakers are preparing themselves to face each other on the crucial

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Gulshan Lake up for grabs-III Build mosque saving the lake, residents say

By Morshed Ali Khan

Rajuk is filling up part of the Gulshan Lake at a cost of Tk 88 lakh to construct a mosque beside Baridhara Road-12 near the New DOHS.

Filling up of the lake has angered Baridhara residents and they termed it a 'mindless act' of the city planners. This correspondent talked to half a dozen residents who demonstrated their anger by raising fists in the air and condemning Rajuk for the act.

A member of the Baridhara Home Owners Association said that the residents did not oppose construction of a mosque but they would never accept filling up of the lake.

"None has the right to fill up our lake and the other day the Prime Minister herself directed all authorities to obtain permission from her office before taking up any such projects," she said preferring anonymity.

The earth filling of the site is

continuing day and night and the supervisors there said that they had been instructed to complete the work 'as quickly as possible'. They were filling up the lake with top quality soil which cost twice as much as normal soil because after all 'it was a mosque', they added.

Asked how much land had been allocated for the mosque, officials at the site gave contradictory estimates. One said that it was 'only' one bigha while others said the total area of the mosque would be more than two bighas.

A site supervisor, who identified himself as Mujibur Rahman and was manning a site office, said that Rajuk was yet to officially demarcate the area of the mosque.

When asked what prompted them to fill up the lake so rapidly without knowing how much to proceed, the supervisor replied that he was verbally in-

structed by top Rajuk officials to continue earth filling.

He also said that DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif had personally requested Rajuk to ensure allocation of land for the mosque.

Fazlul Karim, a long-time resident of the area, said that local ward commissioner Md Wakil Uddin opposed filling up of the lake on such a large scale and requested the contractor to make sure how much is the allocated area.

Wakil, however, could not be contacted for his comments.

A huge DCC earth remover arrived at the site recently to help move huge piles of sand into the lake. These had been left of the roadside by trucks.

Within two days of the first visit to the site by this correspondent, a new signboard was seen inside the lake on the

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Part of Gulshan Lake near Baridhara being filled up.

—Star photo



Platform to Resist Violence against Women brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding punishment to rapists and killers.

—Star photo

Shazneen murder Shahid still giving 'false' statements to CID

By Staff Correspondent

Police continued its investigation but were yet to ascertain whether there was anyone else behind the confessed killer Shahid in the Shazneen murder.

CID officials may pray to court for placing Shahid on remand for some more days on expiry of a five-day remand today, CID sources said.

"We may need to interrogate Shahid further to see whether there was any abettor to Shahid," said a CID official. Shahid will be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court today or tomorrow.

During interrogation, Shahid mentioned the names of at least four persons who, according to him, helped him in committing the crime.

But investigators found those false so far when they verified Shahid's statement about those persons, some irregular staff at Shazneen's father Latifur Rahman's Gulshan residence. Shahid was still giving some contradictory and false statements to the investigating team, the sources said.

However, the team was yet to

hear any name from Shahid that would lead it to trace any abettor to him.

The youngest daughter of Transcom Ltd's Chairman Latifur Rahman, Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, was brutally stabbed to death at their Gulshan residence on the night of April 23.

Meanwhile, the seven-day remand for five servants at Rahman's residence expires today. CID officials said they did not get much useful information from them so far. The five are Humayun Kabir, Hemayetullah, Yasin, Shafiq and Faruq.

Nari Samaj to hoist black flags today

By Staff Correspondent

Sammilita Nari Samaj will stage rallies and hoist black flags in the city today to build up public opinion against repression on and killing of

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The Daily Star learnt from CID and other sources some of the points and questions which CID was investigating till yesterday.

1. CID investigators could not yet find out who received the telephone call from Shazneen's friend Abed on the night of the incident. CID sources said none of the servants and other staff at house admitted receiving the telephone call.

Shazneen was talking to one of his friends, Abed, over phone when the assailant entered her room. While continuing to listen to hear groans over one phone he used a second phone at their Banani residence to call another number at Rahman's residence.

Abed told Gulshan police following the incident that he had heard a male voice on the second phone and he requested him to urgently inform Latifur Rahman or any other inmates of the house that Shazneen was screaming in her room.

Someone, according to police, put the phone on hold. The

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'Resist violence against women and children, punish killers'

By Staff Correspondent

Children and parents staged a silent march in the city yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to the killers of Shazneen and all others involved in repression on children and women.

At the end of the march, students, teachers and other professional persons demanded raising of awareness about the need for creating a social environment of safety and security. They urged all to build a social movement for eliminating violence and crime. They also called for a ban on satellite television which 'created social unrest'.

The march was participated by a few hundred students and teachers of city's schools and many others from several clubs and associations.

The march began from the premises of the Engineering Institute and ended near the Jatiya Press Club. A rally was held there and many participants spoke.

Organised by the 'Platform to Resist Violence against Women,' participants in the march included a large number of teachers and students from Sunbeam School, Scholastica,

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Lakkatura Occidental agrees to rehabilitate affected tea garden workers

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 2: US company Occidental has agreed to rehabilitate the affected tea garden workers, shifting them from their present dwellings adjacent to the boundary of the Lakkatura gas well site, according to official sources.

An official of the National Tea Company which owns the Lakkatura Tea Estate told The Daily Star that they held a meeting with the representatives of Occidental after the leakage of well on Tuesday night.

Occidental agreed in principle to rehabilitate the tea garden workers residing adjacent to the well site," the official said, requesting anonymity.

The management of the tea estate also demanded compensation for the losses of the workers and disruption in the factory's production for one day, following the leakage, he said.

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BGMEA urges govt to solve banking problems

Leaders of garments manufacturers yesterday called upon the government to help solve the banking problems immediately for survival of the country's top foreign exchange earning sector, reports BSS.

Speaking at a round table on 'Problems and Prospects of Garment Industries', Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Mostafa Golam Quddus termed the banking problems as the number one hurdle the manufacturers are facing "If the non-cooperation of the banks continues, the sector will collapse", he said.

Organised by Rapport Bangladesh at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, noted economists, journalists, leading manufacturers and leaders of different sectors took part in the round table discussion. Eminent economist and a former finance minister AMA Muhith was moderator.

Besides, the problems of the banking sector, political instability, port facilities, currency devaluation, value addition,

backward linkage industries, child labour, safety measures, human resources development, formation of apparel board and apparel bank came up for discussion.

Dr Osman Haider Chowdhury in his remarks on the points in the position paper placed for the discussion said the cases of Tk 215 crore shown as bank loans against the manufacturers, who had to close down about 300 factories due to loss of business for the continuous strikes in 1995-96, should be solved amicably for the existence and growth of the garment sector. The manufacturers at that time incurred loss worth about Tk 200 crore, he said.

Journalists Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Mahidul Hossain and Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof. Abu Ahmed, former Deputy Prime Minister and a manufacturer Jamal Uddin Ahmad, Managing Director of Progoti Insurance Company Rafiqul Islam, Prof. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, S. A. Chowdhury of packaging sector, manufac-

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Trawler capsizes: Death toll 7

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, May 2: With the recovery of five more bodies from the river Buriganga Friday, the death toll from Wednesday's trawler capsized rose to seven.

The recovered bodies were identified as Saddam, 10, Sohag 11, Kajol 18, Mithu, 25, and Pomi, 11.

Two bodies were recovered on Thursday. Police said seven people drowned on Wednesday night when the trawler of the bridal party collided with another sand-laden vessel while returning home from Jajira in Keraniganj.

Other members of the party managed to swim ashore.

Fire brigade unit from Dhaka with the help of Fotullah police conducted the recovery drive.

Pak FM resigns

ISLAMABAD, May 2: Pakistan's tough-talking Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan quit his job today, saying he wanted to give more of his time to voters in his parliamentary constituency, reports Reuters.

But political sources said a more likely cause of the departure of Khan, son of Pakistan's first military ruler Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, could be a reported row with Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanju, who is closer to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the Prime Minister had accepted a request from Khan to relieve him of the job. It said Khan had asked Sharif to "reassign him" so he could devote more time to his constituency and added: "The Prime Minister has graciously agreed to accede to the request of the foreign minister."

There was no immediate word on whether Khan, who became foreign minister on February 25, 1997, after Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League won general elections, would be given a new ministry.

Local newspaper reports have said Sharif was likely to reshuffle his cabinet before his government presents the next budget to parliament in June.

Political consultations among SAARC leaders A mechanism to be evolved at Colombo summit: Gayoom

By Special Correspondent

Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has said that informal consultations, between summits, among the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation could help ease tension and build confidence in the region.

"We are going to evolve a mechanism for such political consultations between the summits at the next SAARC summit in Colombo in July," Gayoom, who is the current chairman of the SAARC, said at a press conference before ending a three-day visit to Dhaka on Friday.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who were present at the press conference at

the VIP lounge of Zia International Airport, saw him off at the airport along with members of the cabinet.

A 21-gun salute and smartly turned out guard of honour presented by the contingents of three services marked his departure for Thimphu, by a regular flight of the Royal Bhutan Airlines.

The SAARC chairman, on a visit to the capitals of the seven-nation grouping before the next summit, goes to the Nepalese capital Kathmandu from Bhutan.

He visits New Delhi and Islamabad on a later date. Earlier he had been to Colombo.

During his three-day state visit, the Maldivian President had official talks with Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina and called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed, discussing issues relating to SAARC and other bilateral issues between the two nations.

Referring to the informal consultations between the leaders of SAARC, Gayoom said, "if we could continue with such consultations more confidence could be built and tensions eased, which would also address bilateral issues, currently forbidden by the SAARC charter to be discussed."

He said the next summit is going to review the progress of SAARC since the grouping was formed in Dhaka in 1985 to promote regional cooperation. Responding to a question, he

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