

## BNP preparing for Tuesday's hunger strike

By Staff Correspondent

BNP is contacting different professional bodies and opposition parties to draw their support for the planned dawn-to-dusk hunger strike by the party MPs on Tuesday at the Paltan Maidan in the city, sources in the party said yesterday.

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and other party MPs are scheduled to observe the hunger strike demanding repeal of the CHT accord and the laws enacted for its implementation.

The token hunger strike is also aimed at protesting 'deterioration of law and order, price hike of essentials and crisis of gas, power and drinking water'.

The programme is scheduled to start at 8 am and continue till 5 pm. The BNP lawmakers See Page 12 Col 2

## Prof Mahmud to take initiative to end BUET deadlock

By Staff Correspondent

Prof Iqbal Mahmud, who resigned from the post of Vice-Chancellor of BUET on May 4, is now making a move to bring about an end to the deadlock at the university, sources said.

Prof Mahmud is likely to have a series of dialogues with the BUET Teachers Association today. The BUET teachers are on an indefinite strike since May 5 demanding return of Prof Mahmud as VC.

When contacted over telephone last night, Prof Mahmud confirmed that he would take an initiative to resolve the crisis. He, however, did not elaborate.

Some senior teachers of BUET, while talking to this correspondent, observed that a meeting of Association leaders See Page 12 Col 2

## CU classes resume amid tight security

CHITTAGONG, May 9: Classes of Chittagong University resumed today amidst tight security. No untoward incident took place, reports UNB.

On Wednesday, a student was killed during an attack by Islamic Chhatra Shibir activists to capture halls of the university.

Campus sources said the shuttle train of the university resumed its service today under police escort. The train stopped its service after a train driver was wounded in a gunfire by miscreants on May 3.

## Restriction on entry of outsiders to DU halls

The Provosts Standing Committee of Dhaka University has decided to allow only residential students to enter their respective dormitories, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the committee yesterday afternoon. Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury and Proctor of the university were also present.

The meeting also decided that the main gates of the residential halls will be closed at 11 pm every night.

Nobody other than the residents See Page 12 Col 1

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# No fresh loans unless arrears repaid : Kibria

Star Business Report

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday categorically said that the borrowers who did not repay their earlier loans would not get fresh loans from banks and other financial institutions.

He, however, said that those who paid back all bank loans would not face any difficulty in getting government help and financial support from the banks.

He was speaking as chief guest at a roundtable discussion arranged by the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at a city hotel.

Minister for Industries and Commerce Tofael Ahmed also addressed the meeting as special guest.

Leaders of different chambers and sectors like garments, textile, jute, leather, frozen food, steel and engineering, specialised textiles and capital market took part in the discussion, presided over by FBCCI President Yusuf Abdullah Harun.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarker replied to questions on bank-related issues raised by the chamber leaders and businessmen during the three-hour discussion in presence of the two ministers.

The governor was assisted by managing directors of different nationalised and private commercial banks.

The finance minister urged the bankers and the businessmen to work together on the basis of cooperation for development of the national economy. He underscored the need for improving the standard of service in local banks and financial institutions up to the international level.

"If we can not improve our standard up to international level we may not survive in the current competitive world," Kibria said.

Tofael Ahmed observed that a clear cut definition of loan defaulters was necessary. "Otherwise, hundreds of small enterprises will become sick very soon," he said.

He believed that only a small section of businessmen were involved in financial corruption.

The industries minister said, a large number of industries became sick due to a "prompt liberalisation process" started by the previous government without making necessary reforms in the economy.

Speaking on the occasion, the FBCCI president urged the government to take some measures in the coming budget to protect the country's industrial sector, following the experience of liberalisation.

There are some critical issues which should be addressed immediately. Otherwise, progress of the country's economy will be hindered," he said.

"As most of the problems are related to banks, we have arranged the meeting with bankers first and it will be followed by several other sector-wise meetings," Harun informed the businessmen at the Roundtable.

The business leaders who took part in the discussion were, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (MCCI) Laila Rahman Kabir, President of Dhaka Chamber Rashed Maksud Khan, President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Mostafa Golam Qudus, President of Bangladesh Association of Banks Abdul Awal Minto, President of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association Golam Mostafa, Chairman of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association Mohammad Shahjahan, Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Jute Association (BJA) Rezaul Karim, Chairman of Bangladesh Jute Mills Association Mirza Ali Behrouz Ispahani and Dhaka Stock Exchange Chairman Rakibur Rahman.

The bank officials replied to various questions on different issues raised by the business leaders.

BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Qudus raised various problems faced by garments exporters.

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## Gulshan Lake Construction work still continues

By Staff Correspondent

Many developers are still continuing construction work on the banks of Gulshan lake.

Minister for Housing and Public Works Mohammad Nasim had directed Rajuk to take necessary steps to stop all construction on the banks of Gulshan Lake until completion of an investigation in to how plots were allotted after filling up the lake.

The minister visited the lake area on Wednesday following reports on indiscriminate filling up of the lake in The Daily Star. He issued an on-the-spot directive to Rajuk to conduct a survey to determine the extent of 'encroachment' in the area.

According to sources in Rajuk, the Estate section and the See Page 12 Col 1

## JS business advisory body meets today

By Staff Correspondent

Business Advisory Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad meets at 5 pm today to decide on the length of the current session and some other related issues.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury will preside over the meeting to be held at the Sangsad Bhavan.

The meeting is also expected to discuss the formation of parliamentary standing committees and the completion of general discussion on the President's address to the House. The committee is also likely to discuss the April 15 untoward incident in the parliament for which the Speaker held 14 BNP lawmakers including Deputy Leader of the Opposition AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali responsible.

Today's meeting of the committee will be the first one since the Speaker referred the April 15 incident to the highest-level Sangsad body headed by the Speaker and comprising the Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition and representatives of all the parties represented in the parliament.

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## Muggers snatch Tk 5.6 lakh at Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 9: Armed muggers snatched Tk 5.64,000 at gunpoint from the staff of a foreign company from near the GEC Crossing this afternoon, police said.

Police informed that four armed muggers attacked the staff of a foreign company as they just got off a van with the money in front of a branch of Grindlays Bank.

After snatching the money the muggers fled from the scene by exploding a cocktail, police said. A staff member of the company received injuries during the attack, police added.

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## Magurchhara gas well disaster

Climatic changes may hit tea output, fear BTRI officials

By Mizan Ali and Iqbal Siddiquee

There has been perceptible changes in the composition of soil affecting fertility and productivity in and around the drilling site at Magurchhara gasfield as an after effect of the explosion on June 15 last year.

Besides, 'rehabilitation of affected areas' might take a few years, said officials of Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) at Srimangal under Moulvi Bazar district.

A long term climatic change as an aftermath of the blow-out is feared by tea garden owners. Environmental changes in the area would adversely affect tea production, they apprehend.

BTRI officials said 'pollination process in the area has been imbalanced' as lot of beneficial insects perished during and after the blow-out. Water holding capacity of soil has



A dance sequence at a function at Ramna Batmul in the city on the second day yesterday of the three-day national-level programme in observance of 137th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. — Star photo

## String stuck up in gas well Occidental's drilling in Bibiana suspended

By Sharier Khan

US company Occidental has suspended its drilling operations in Bibiana gas well near Sherpur as the drilling string got stuck up in the well at a depth of 4000 meters on April 9, sources said.

Occidental is now seeking permission from the Petrobangla to conduct a by-pass drilling in the well.

The suspension of operation since April 9 is now adding an additional cost of between 30,000 and 60,000 US dollars everyday to the total cost of scheme.

Occidental was drilling to reach a depth of 4400 meters in Bibiana. Since it began the drilling few months ago, Occidental was getting 'somewhat disappointing' signals. But the signals turned to be 'very positive' in late March, the sources said.

On April 9, when the drilling string reached 4005 meters, it got stuck up inside the well and the operation was suspended, the sources said.

Occidental, which has already earned a bad reputation for poor performer in Bangladesh, attempted to recover the drilling string but failed to do so.

In addition, it spent too much time trying to recover the drilling string instead of going for an alternative method to continue drilling of the well, said a source.

On April 27, Occidental sought permission from the Petrobangla through a letter to initiate a by-passing drilling to reach the targeted depth. The letter reached Petrobangla two days later and Petrobangla was 'unhappy' because of Occidental's 'delay' in seeking the permission.

The US company is now expected to sit with Petrobangla in a week to discuss this issue as well as the Jalalabad-1 gas well leakage incident.

"It is a normal practice worldwide that if such incidents occur, the operator first tries for few days to recover the drilling string. If it seems after a week that the tool can not be recovered the operator must move on to side-tracking the affected point of the well," said an

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## Shazneen murder Shahid repeats statement, Hasan denies involvement

By Staff Correspondent

The CID continues its investigation to find out whether more than one person were involved in the Shazneen murder in Gulshan on April 23.

Shahid, the prime suspect in the murder case, yesterday repeated his earlier statement to interrogators that he had killed Shazneen. But CID officials were still probing if there was any conspiracy behind the brutal murder. CID sources said.

Shahid passed the second day of a five-day remand in the third phase yesterday.

Meanwhile, contractor Hasan continued denying his involvement in the killing of 15-year-old Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, youngest daughter of the Chairman of Transcom Ltd. Latifur Rahman.

Hasan told investigators that he did not know anything about the plan for attack on Shazneen.

Hasan's supervisor Badal and a carpenter, Shoni Ram, were now on a two-day CID remand for the second time.

CID investigators hoped that they would soon get the viscera report on Shazneen from Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A CID official said Shahid often retracted his statements since he was placed on remand on April 28.

## CHT Bills Demand of Justice Notice served on govt seeking amendments

A demand of Justice Notice was served on the government yesterday, seeking amendments to the CHT Bills passed by Parliament last week, reports UNB.

The notice was given to the Secretaries of Law and Parliamentary Affairs and Special Affairs Division by Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, House of Law, on behalf of Ferdous Ahmed Quarishi, convener of the National Conference on CHT.

The legal notice said the petitioner will move the High Court with a writ petition if the demand is not met by today.

"And in such event you will also be held responsible for all the costs and consequences thereof," it said.

It said all the four CHT bills were thoroughly examined. Certain provisions of the bills have affected and infringed the fundamental rights of the citizens, violated the Constitution and affected the sovereignty of the country, it added.

By providing certain privileges to a section of people, the legal notice said, the bills have grossly violated the equal rights of citizens guaranteed by the Constitution.

It said special status to the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban over other districts See Page 12 Col 6

Prisoner stabs jail inmate to death in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 9: An under-trial prisoner was stabbed to death by another prisoner at Chittagong jail this afternoon, jail officials and police said.

The victim was identified as Md Alam. Jail officials said Alam received stab injuries during a fight with another prisoner, Abdul Kader, inside the jail at around 4:30 pm when both of them were going to see visitors.

Alam was immediately rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

The incident sparked off tension inside the jail and the authorities deployed a large number of police in and around the jail to prevent any outbreak of violence.

Jail officials could not immediately give the cause of the fight. Investigation was started in this regard, they said.

Both the prisoners were arrested by police in connection with criminal cases.

## 7-party alliance processions in city today

The BNP-led seven party alliance will bring out protest processions in the city today demanding cancellation of the 'anti-constitutional accord on CHT', reports UNB.

The alliance's programme is also to protest against the failure to halt deterioration of law and order, control price-hike and ensure security of public life.

The BNP will bring out its procession at 5 pm from Ramna Restaurant, said a party press release.

## Arrest of BCL leader Fresh violence feared at Mymensingh

By Reaz Ahmed, back from Mymensingh

Additional police force aided by two platoons of BDR personnel have been kept on alert to contain fresh violence over arrest of a BCL leader at Mymensingh.

In the face of mounting pressure from local political high-ups for release of the student leader, the district administration of Mymensingh received directives from Dhaka to go tough in checking violence and not to bother about the political identity of those involved.

The trouble began on May 4 with a dispute over a small piece of land at Gohalkandi in Mymensingh town. Residents of the area caught an alleged toll collector, Mukul, on the day and handed him over to police.

But, later on the day, a section of youths reportedly led by Vice President of Ananda Mohan University College Students' Union, Moshtaque Ahmed Ruhi, stormed Kotwali thana to snatch Mukul from police custody.

The following two days were like a nightmare for the people of Mymensingh town as arrest of Ruhi and four others led to

rowdy protests from the ruling Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League. BCL activists put up barricades on rail tracks both on Tuesday and Wednesday, keeping thousands of train passengers stranded.

District administration officials, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday that ruling party leaders in the district were mounting pressure for immediate release of Ruhi.

"We are in a state of restlessness. Every now and then they (the leaders) are visiting us and insisting on his release," said an official. "And, we are assuring them that law will take its own course."

He, however, said it was because of clear directive from the ministry concerned in Dhaka not to bow to any pressure, "we could, so far, withstand the mounting pressure."

During a day-long visit to Mymensingh town yesterday, this correspondent talked with local political leaders, police officials and also a cross section of people. They all appreciate

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## Talat Mahmood passes away

MUMBAI, May 9: Legendary singer Talat Mahmood, who held sway over music-lovers between the 40s and 60s — the golden era of Hindi cinema — with his melodious rendition of emotional songs, died here today following a heart attack at the age of 75, reports PTI.

Talat, whose forte was ghazal singing, transformed the music scene in the 40s with his soulful rendering of songs in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati.

Born on February 24, 1924, the handsome well-dressed man from Lucknow first got his foothold in the film industry in 1945 at Calcutta as a hero in

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Admission seekers coming out of an examination hall at Dhaka University after appearing in the admission test yesterday. — Star photo

# Hanif's 4 yrs in office : Little to cheer about

By Morshed Ali Khan

After having completed four years in the Nagar Bhaban, Mayor Mohammad Hanif is busy putting his accounts right. In fact, he has little to count.

Other than successfully installing some two dozen foot overbridges in the city, the Mayor has had little success in the management of this metropolis.

As the first ever elected Mayor of the city, Hanif has already secured a place in history. Before long BCS candidates might be better off learning this fact. But during his four years of tenure the city dwellers have had little to cheer about.

All the Mayor's financial canons were fired in a failed attempt to eradicate mosquitoes from the city. While the blood sucking insects kept stinging, the Mayor came up with an apology.

"It was a mistake on my part to pledge that once elected I would eradicate mosquitoes from the city. In fact, with the city's present infrastructure, it is never possible to do so," the Mayor said while exchanging views with newsmen on the occasion of completion of his four years in the Nagar Bhaban.

One must appreciate the Mayor's initiative to speak out

the truth with an open heart because people are not much used to hearing such confessions from a politician.

Over a long period last year, the monumental Nagar Bhaban's corridors and office rooms echoed with one simple topic — DCC's severe fund constraint and its failure to pay off the contractors. The situation was so bad that several officials had to keep their office doors locked fearing reprisal from angry contractors. The Chief Executive Officer of the DCC regularly shuttled to the LGRD Ministry to squeeze out funds to tackle the problem. The Accounts Officer maintained an

absolute tight lip amid moaning young men pursuing for payments in his cramped office. He would simply not say how much is owed and what the current financial situation was.

Several DCC officials directly blamed the Mayor for his election pledge to freeze the amount of holding tax. When the city management became more expensive by day, they alleged, the Mayor certainly did not think how he would manage it properly.

At one stage, it seemed, the Mayor turned to increase the revenue earnings. All over the

city, the DCC indiscriminately rented out hoarding spaces. Sickening hoardings of all sizes filled the city streets, parks, islands, trees and rooftops adding a new pollutant to Dhaka's already distressed existence — the vision pollution.

The DCC's tax collectors stepped up their activities and, to the horror of the city's nine million inhabitants, the engineering section embarked upon grabbing public parks, roads, canals, playgrounds, road islands, and any available open space for commercial ventures. It did not take them time to re-

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Mayor Hanif