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## Ekushey fair heats up

By DU Correspondent

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair was a festive look at book enthusiasts of the city thronged the Bangla Academy premises yesterday, the third day of the month-long fair.

A total of 13 new books came to the fair yesterday, said Bangla Academy, the organiser of the annual event.

Meanwhile, renowned singers Subir Nandi, Aji Ray and Reena Ferdoushi rendered songs reflecting the spirit of the 1952 Language Movement at a musical soiree held on the Academy premises. A recitation programme followed, in which Anjumanara and Shafiqul Islam Bahar were among the participants.

The Academy is sponsoring programmes marking the birth centenaries of famous litera-

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## Larma meets PM today

By Special Correspondent

Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) Chairman Jyotirindriya Bodhipriya Larma is meeting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today.

The meeting is expected to break the long standing impasse on full implementation of the CHT peace accord, according to sources.

The meeting is likely to be preceded by the Cabinet approving several amendments to the Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban hill district council acts.

Other smaller differences like nomination of three members from Bangalee settlers to the 22-member Regional Council (RC) are also likely to be resolved following the meeting, the sources said.

Larma has so far declined to take the office of Chairman of the RC for which he was nominated by the government earlier in October.

Meanwhile, Minister for CHT Affairs Kalpanjan Chakma, had a meeting with Larma at the guest house of Chittagong Port Trust at Dharmadigha in the city where the latter was lodged.

Larma and his team arrived in the capital from Khagrachhari on Saturday night.

## Boy burnt alive, 300 shanties gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent

A five-year old boy was burnt alive and about 300 shanties were gutted at a slum at Muslimbagh under Kamrangirchar thana in the city Saturday night.

Police identified the dead as Polash, 5, son of Abdul Mannan, a resident of the slum. The fire left about 300 families homeless, according to police and Fire Brigade sources.

The body of Polash was recovered from the debris yesterday morning. The extent of

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## Inside Today

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## An Aberration in terms of Civilization

Column: Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

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1999 Calcutta Book Fair

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### Prayer Timings

February 8

Azan 5:24 Jamaat 5:28

Fajr 5:24 Jamaat 5:28

Zohr 12:45 1:15

Asr 4:10 4:20

Maghrib 5:55 5:58

Esha 7:10 7:20

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Abdullah Jordan's new monarch

# King Hussein passes away

AMMAN, Feb 7: King Hussein of Jordan, who became a key force for stability in the turbulent Middle East in more than four decades as ruler of his strategically placed nation, died today of complications from cancer. He was 63, reports AP.

In the Jordanian capital of Amman, mosque loudspeakers sounded Quranic verses in a sign of mourning. People scurried, sobbing, through rain-soaked streets. Outside the hospital, hundreds of people chanted the king's name. On the edge of the capital, shopkeepers hung a black banner reading "Goodbye, King Hussein."

The king died at 11:43 am (0943 GMT) in his bed at the King Hussein Medical City.

Queen Noor and Hussein's children were all with him when he died, a senior palace source said. The immediate cause of death was heart failure brought on by complications from his terminal cancer, the official said.

The king had been on a respirator, which was not switched off until after his heart had stopped and his brain function completely ceased, a medical source said.

Jordan's Cabinet immediately met and proclaimed Crown Prince Abdullah King, a day after he had been named regent.

"The kingship was transferred constitutionally to Crown Prince Abdullah... in view of His Majesty King Hussein's death," said a Cabinet statement read over state TV by a weeping announcer.

The king had maintained an extraordinarily close personal relationship with his people, and ordinary Jordanians appeared genuinely grief-stricken as word of the monarch's death spread.

"In my heart he will always be my king," said Mohammed Ibrahim as flags were lowered in the streets of Amman and portraits of the king draped with black.

"This is God's judgement and God's will," the 37-year-old Abdullah told the nation in a solemn address less than an hour after the death. "God have mercy on Hussein the father, See Page 12 Col 7

See Page 12 Col 7

## Nat'l flag to fly at half mast in Bangladesh

The national flag will fly at half-mast atop all government and semi-government offices and Bangladesh missions abroad today and tomorrow as a mark of respect to late King Hussein of Jordan, said a press release. reports APB.

## PM unable to attend funeral

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would not be able to attend King Hussein's funeral in Amman today which would be attended by a large number of heads of state and government, officials sources said.

When reached by telephone, state minister for foreign affairs Abdul Hasan Chowdhury said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was very keen to attend the funeral of the late King and offer her prayers. Unfortunately, because of the non-availability of an aircraft, she would be unable to attend the funeral. The problem has compounded because the Jordanian authorities had announced that no aircraft would be allowed to land in Amman after 10:30 in the morning."

The two-day hartal, which will be imposed on the nation tomorrow and the day after, will further erode any distinction there was between AL and BNP as far as method of doing politics was concerned. BNP's greatest loss from all this will be that it will become totally indistinguishable from the party that it wants to replace.

## Energy sector Bangladesh, US to jointly explore potentialities

Bangladesh and the United States have agreed to work together for exploring the potentialities of the country's energy sector, which US experts said holds the key to its prosperity, reports UNB.

Both the countries are also eager to work closely to formulate a regulatory system to manage the prospective sector now that it is attracting significant foreign investments.

The unanimous views were expressed by State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Rafiqul Islam and visiting American Acting Assistant Secretary Calvin Humphrey at a meeting when the US energy delegation called on the former yesterday at his ministry.

All on the 14-member US energy mission were present at the meeting. Energy secretary Dr Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, power secretary GM Mandal, PDB chairman Nooruddin M Kamal and the Petrobangla

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# When foresters turn poachers



## Old habits die hard

The picture does not always tell the story. This is the point (right) where the World Heritage Site starts and this is the plaque (left) that marks it. As the monument was being unveiled on February 4, the pledges of the day were broken just yards away.

— Star photo by Morshed Ali Khan

By Morshed Ali Khan  
back from Heron Point

Barely 150 feet from the classic monument to the forest and its inhabitants, a little female deer found itself inside a strongly built wooden cage.

The cage, placed on top of a tawler belonging to the Department of Forest, portrayed a cruel irony.

It was a big occasion for the conservators of the world's largest mangrove as they hosted the unveiling of the World Heritage Site plaque at Heron Point of the Sundarbans on February 4. The ceremony was graced by no less a person than the prime minister.

The doe had been caught the day before, boatman Kamrul said, pointing his finger at the terrified animal.

Reporters discovered the encaged animal later in the evening on the quay. Apparently disturbed by queries, a top forest official said the doe was meant for the prime minister as a "traditional gift". See Page 12 Col 1

## Commentary

# These hartals will do BNP no good

by Mahfuz Anam

In a politics that is propelled mainly by hatred and vengeance, BNP is fast losing what many consider to be its greatest asset — its image of a party that is sober, rational and modern. It was in contrast to Awami League's abrasive image that BNP attracted a large number of middle class voters who are now becoming increasingly frustrated at the present 'do or die' policy of BNP to go to power.

The latest speech by Khaleda Zia in which she called to 'replace the chief minister with the prime minister' where she obviously meant herself to be the prime minister, struck many as the most shameful self promotion at the expense of public good.

The two-day hartal, which will be imposed on the nation tomorrow and the day after, will further erode any distinction there was between AL and BNP as far as method of doing politics was concerned. BNP's greatest loss from all this will be that it will become totally indistinguishable from the party that it wants to replace.

The 48-hour hartals have been called by the BNP and its allies (who were AL's allies against the BNP just the other day) ostensibly to realise their 4-point demand but actually to harass the government just as the AL and its allies (the same two) had done when BNP was in power. It is a continuation of the 'Politics of tit for tat' and the country be damned that we had written about earlier. In fact regardless of whatever show of force on the streets, there will be an undercurrent of negative reaction among the general public, which cannot but go against the callers of the hartals. Given the small stake of the others, the main sufferer is likely to be the BNP.

As we had said earlier, one of the major attractions of the BNP in the public mind was that it is a far sober party compared to the AL. It was considered to be less aggressive, less imposing, less self righteous and definitely less muscle flexing than the AL. Except for some instances in the case JCD the general impression of the

BNP was of a party which could be reasoned with. This was also supposedly the party of the business people and as such was expected to understand the needs of the economy far greater than others. This image became particularly stronger while it was in power. For most part BNP allowed Awami League a virtual free hand on the streets, compared to the aggressive resistance by the ruling party now. The acceptance of a Commonwealth mediator — Sir Ninian — further enhanced BNP image as a party trying very hard to find a compromise. (Some people felt that it was a mistake to accept foreign mediation as it permitted outside interference in our internal affairs. Even if we accept that argument, it only proved to what length the ruling BNP was willing to go to find a solution).

Repeated hartal calls are fast changing all this. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina strikes a common chord when she asks 'Why these hartals. What are the issues?' Yes, what are the issues? See page 11

## BNP warns of extending hartal

BNP has warned of extension of the 48-hour hartal if the government resorts to terrorism during the shutdown beginning Tuesday, reports UNB.

The warning came from a joint emergency meeting of BNP and its front organisations held at the party's central office yesterday with secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The meeting, attended by members of party's national executive committee, presidents, general secretaries and convenors of its front organisations, urged the countrymen to make the Feb 9-10 hartal a success.

Criticising the role of CEC Abu Hena in previous elections, including Union Parishad, BNP Secretary General said the political parties, who represent 65 per cent of the population, are now demanding his resignation as he serves the ruling party's purpose.

BNP secretary general said both government and the CEC will have to bear the consequences as the situation is worsening rapidly following government attempt to hold municipal election unilaterally against public opinion.

## AL plans anti-hartal processions Feb 9-10

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Awami League plans to take a stronger anti-hartal stand this time as the BNP-led opposition alliance goes for a 48-hour nationwide shutdown from tomorrow.

As the Jatiya Sangsad session adjourned last night to resume on February 14, Treasury Bench lawmakers hurried to reach respective constituencies with plans to declare 'hartal-free' zones as desired by party chief and prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Meanwhile, an extended meeting of the Dhaka city unit of AL, held at the party's central office last night, decided to bring out anti-hartal processions throughout the capital both on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The meeting over, a city AL leader told The Daily Star that party lawmakers elected from different constituencies in Dhaka would take the responsibility to persuade shopkeepers to keep their shutters up during hartal hours.

The meeting, chaired by city AL president and Dhaka Mayor Mohammad Hanif, also decided that AL workers would help those willing to ply their vehicles on the streets on February 9 and 10.

## 'VC not in line with JU rules'

By JU Correspondent

A member of Jahangirnagar University (JU) Syndicate has challenged the Vice Chancellor's order, which allowed three students found guilty of rape and abetting the act, to sit for their examination under special arrangement.

Raising the issue at the JU syndicate meeting on Saturday, the syndicate member Prof. M Imamuddin said the permission to the students for appearing in examinations at a 'sub centre' outside the campus was a clear violation of the 1973 University Act, syndicate sources said.

According to the 1973 act, the member Prof. Imamuddin told the JU syndicate, the academic council must approve the permission to sit for examination outside the campus. "The Vice Chancellor (VC) has clearly violated the university act by allowing the students to sit for

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## 4 killed as train hits bus, truck & rickshaws at level-crossing

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 7: Four people were killed and 25 others injured when a train hit a minibus and a truck and ran over several rickshaws at the rail gate No-2 on the Bangladesh road in the town yesterday evening.

Witnesses said a street vendor and a rickshawpuller were among those killed but none of the dead could be identified.

All the bodies were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy. The injured were rushed to different hospitals in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

The accident took place as the minibus and the truck tried to cross the level crossing while the train was passing, witnesses said. The railway signalman was not present at the level crossing and the rail gate was open when the accident occurred, they said.

## Attempt on poet's life

# Mahatabuddin gives judicial statement

By Staff Correspondent

Mahatabuddin, one of the two persons caught red-handed while allegedly attempting to kill poet Shamsur Rahman at his Shyamoli residence in the city on January 18, yesterday gave a judicial statement before the CMM's Court.

The other, Fazle Hasan, gave a judicial statement on February 3.

A case was filed with Mohammadpur thana in connection with the incident and police recovered a pipegun from their possession.

Mahatabuddin was produced before the court after a 16-day police remand in four phases.

He took about three hours to give his statement to a metropolitan magistrate yesterday evening, our court correspondent reported quoting

sources. In his statement Mahatabuddin reportedly confessed that he went to Chittagong for Chilla (special prayer) and was forcibly picked up and sent to a training camp in Chittagong for 20 days.

On completion of the training, he was sent to the Jagu Mujahid office at Khilgaon, Dhaka and finally was kept at a slum. During his stay at the slum, he was paid Tk 150.

Mahatabuddin was quoted as saying that he went to the residence of poet Shamsur Rahman as asked by Sheikh Farid, Hasan and Mozammel.

A pipe gun was given to their group of three from Hartuk-Uz-Jihad office in the city, he added.

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