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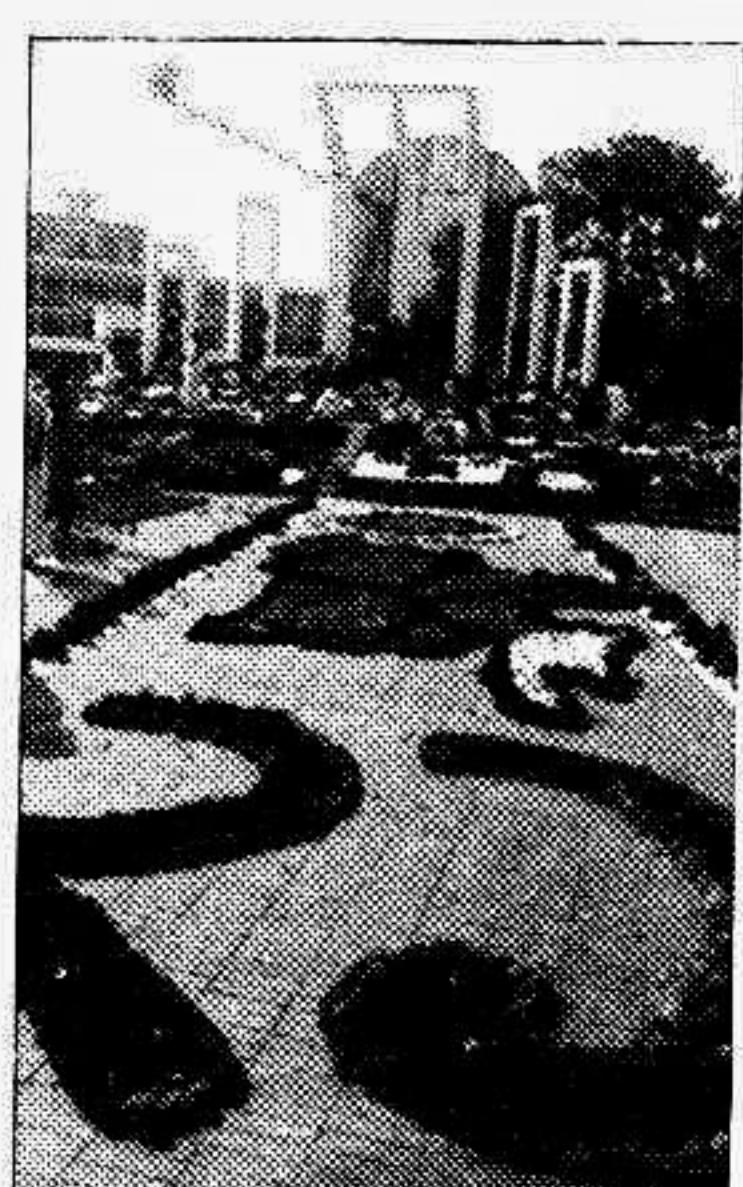
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Ekushey fair heats up

By DU Correspondent

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair wore a festive look as 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, Ajit Ray and Reema Ferdoush 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
Parbatty Chattogram Jana Sanghati 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, Khagrachari 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 Kalparjan Chakma had a meeting with Larma at the guest house of Chittagong Port Trust at Dhamondi in the city where the latter was lodged.

Larma and his team arrived in the capital from Khagrachari 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 Muslinbagh under Kamrangirchar thana in the city Saturday night.

Police identified the dead as Polash, 5, son of Abdul Manan, 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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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. 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 Hus-

sein's death," said a Cabinet statement read over state TV by a weeping announcer.

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.

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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 Hus-

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The newly sworn-in King Abdullah of Jordan walks past a giant portrait of his father King Hussein yesterday at an emergency parliament session in Amman. Abdullah was sworn in following the death of King Hussein at the age of 63, after a seven-month-long battle against cancer.

— AFP photo

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 Bangladeshi 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 Abul 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 state minister said that it was his personal opinion, "that it has once again become reinforced that the prime minister should have an aircraft for her own use."

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Jalalabad Gasfield starts production

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Feb 7: Occidental started supplying gas to the National Grid from Jalalabad Gasfield at about midnight last night.

Field Manager of the US company in Sylhet Preston Howard told The Daily Star that except some minor troubles, production wells and the processing plant were functioning properly.

We are supplying 60 mmcf/d of gas from the two wells — JB1 and JB2 — to the National Grid," However, production was suspended for several hours from this morning and resumed this afternoon, he said. Both the wells and the plant were put into operation at 11:30 pm yesterday.

The raw gas produced in the wells is being sent to the processing plant installed in a nearby area. From there, the dry gas is being sent Kailashtha point in Golapganj thana

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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.

Talking to UNB, Abu Hena said the Election Commission has been taking all preparations to ensure free and fair polls on schedule in peaceful atmosphere.

He said necessary instructions have been issued to local authorities to constitute law and order committee for maintaining peace during the polling.

Asked if the opposition hartal would obstruct the elections, CEC said it's an issue that should be resolved by political parties.

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through the 15 km pipeline for supply to the National Grid, he said.

With two more wells — JB3 and JB4 — put into operation within a week, total production in the gas field will stand at 100 mmcfd. The wells have a capacity of 125 mmcfd in total. The approximate reserve in the structure would be one trillion cubic feet, official survey reports say.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to inaugurate the gas processing plant sometime later this month, an official said.

Occidental expects to continue production in the Jalalabad gas field for about 15 years. In this field, the company drilled three new wells and developed another. All these are being put into production now. Test production in the wells began in November 19

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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By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Incidents of murder have increased alarmingly in the country.

There were 193 murders last month against 143 in the previous month. The number was 164 in November, 187 in October and 189 in September last, according to police and newspaper reports.

A total of 52 cases of violence against women including nine murders for dowry were reported last month against the previous month's eight murders and 34 other incidents. Dowry deaths were 12 each in October and November and 15 in September.

The most talked-about incident which caught the city dwellers by surprise was the attempt on poet Shamsur Rahman at his Shymoli residence on January 18, allegedly by members of Harkut-Uz-Jihad a religious extremist group. Police nabbed 17 people in connection with the incident.

Twenty-one women suffered acid burns during January. The number was nine in December, 21 in November, 17 in October and 10 in September.

A young man, Kochi, was killed to death at Fulbaria in Khulna on January 2 and a

constable of Special Branch, fatally injured by some unidentified assailants in the city's Demra area, died at the orthopaedic hospital on the same day.

The most sensational incident was the killing of film star Sohel Chowdhury in December at a club in the city's post Gulsan area in which some big businessmen were allegedly involved, according to police. Two businessmen Bunti Islam, and Aziz Mohammad Bhui, are now in custody for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Two persons were killed in a clash between two rival groups of extortionists at Bamihalbari in Natore on January 9.

Two labour leaders, Sirajul Hoque and Manik Miah, were

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876 deaths in five months

Murders on the rise

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

At least 50 people allegedly committed suicide during January against 35 in December.

Suicide deaths were 48 in November, 62 in October and 63 in September. A total of 45 people were abducted during January, 28 in December, 46 in November, 49 in October and 48 in September, police and news-paper reports said.

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