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Lead-free petrol to be imported from July 1

The government will import lead-free petrol from July 1 to minimise air pollution, reports BSS.

The National Environmental Council at its sixth meeting chaired by Forest and Environment Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury took the decision yesterday.

The meeting also decided to impose high duties on imported two-stroke engines used in auto-rickshaws and make 'catalytic converter' mandatory for buses, trucks and other vehicles.

The converter frees fuels from lead, the main culprit for city's air pollution.

The meeting also discussed measures against black smoke, noise pollution, introduction of more double-decker buses and constitution of environment courts.

The Environment Minister See Page 12 Col 6

Biman's failure to lease planes puts int'l flights in disarray

By Special Correspondent
Bangladesh Biman is yet to get two aircraft on lease from Air Chartered World to ferry hajj pilgrims, leaving its regular international schedule in disarray.

Chinese company, China South Airlines, had agreed to provide two Boeing-777-200 wide-bodied aircraft for chartered hajj flights, through the Air Chartered World, to carry 380 pilgrims each flight.

Now, Biman has started direct talks with representatives from the Chinese company who arrived in the city Saturday night.

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Prayer Timings

March 1		
Fajr	Azhan	Jamaat
5:29	5:34	
Johr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:05	6:08
Esha	7:25	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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Warm smiles and radiant aspirations

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (middle) and Iranian First Vice President Dr Hassan Habibi (left) upon their arrival in Dhaka. The leaders are in the city to attend the D-8 Summit starting today.

—Star Photo by A K M Mohsin

Leaders to focus on economic programmes

D-8 summit opens today

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh plays host to a two-day Summit of the D-8 countries beginning in Dhaka today.

Expansion of trade and taking up of concrete economic programmes will receive primary focus at the Summit of the Developing Eight (D-8) that has already identified 13 thrust areas of cooperation.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the Summit at 3 pm at the newly built Sheraton Hotel Conference Centre. The opening session will be followed by a state banquet hosted by President Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban in the evening.

The Summit will be capped by the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration tomorrow, en-

shrining the pledges and commitments of the participating nations.

It will be attended by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel.

President Demirel, Prime Minister Mahathir and Iran's First Vice President Dr Hassan Habibi arrived yesterday and were received at the Zia International Airport by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Smartly turned out contingents drawn from the three services presented separate guard of honour to each of the distinguished leaders after they alighted from their aircraft.

Egyptian President Hosni

Mubarak, Iranian President Khatami and Indonesian President B J Habibie would be unable to attend the Summit due to 'domestic compulsions.'

Nigeria, which is busy with general elections is expected to be represented by a senior official.

BTV to telecast

Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast live the inaugural and concluding sessions of the two-day D-8 Summit beginning today, reports APB.

The programmes will be telecast directly from the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, the venue of the summit, at 3 pm today and 6 pm tomorrow, a PID handout said yesterday.

Egypt is being represented by its Foreign Minister Amre M Moussa, Indonesia by its Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare and Poverty Eradication Haryono Suyono and Iran by its First Vice President Dr Hassan Habibi.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is due to arrive this morning.

Tomorrow, the leaders attending the Summit would go for a three-hour river cruise on the Meghna aboard the refurbished luxury vessel M V Masud.

The D-8 was launched on June 7, 1997 in Istanbul, comprising the eight largest Muslim countries in terms of population. These are: Bangladesh, See Page 12 Col 4

BNP, JP discuss possible stance on UZ polls

By Nazmul Ashraf and Rezaul Karim

Desperate to give teeth to the current anti-government agitation, Opposition leader Khaleda Zia passed another hectic day yesterday at her Minto Road official residence where she had exclusive talks with her senior colleagues in the BNP and a top leader of the Jatiya Party.

In the wake of the Prime Minister's announcement on Saturday to hold elections to the Upazila Parishads in May, they mainly discussed the possible opposition stance on the polls, sources said.

It was the third round in a

series of discussions the Opposition leader had been holding since her party's failed attempt to resist the crucial municipal elections. BNP and its allies boycotted the February 23-25 municipal polls and called for a boycott on the election dates and the key dates leading to the polling. But the shutdown failed to stop holding of the polls, held by and large peacefully with a 60 per cent turnout of voters.

Several BNP leaders, who met Khaleda Zia yesterday, said that she was determined not to See Page 11

Municipal polls 64 tribunals set up to settle disputes

Sixty-four election tribunals have been constituted to settle disputes in the recently held pourashaba elections in the country, reports BSS.

Sixty-one sub-judges have been appointed for 61 tribunals to settle disputes in their respective districts while the district magistrates in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts will act as judges of the tribunals of the three hill districts, an EC press release said yesterday.

The Election Commission has urged all concerned to lodge complaints with the tribunals within 30 days of the publication of the gazette notification of the elected representatives as per municipal elections rule. The candidates personally or any of his authorised persons can register the complaints with the election tribunal, it added.

Cross-examination of Shazneen's father continues

By Staff Correspondent
Latifur Rahman, father of murdered teenager Shazneen, was cross-examined by Mohammad Ali, lawyer of supervisor Badal, an accused in the Shazneen murder case, for the fifth day in the Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday for about two hours starting from 11 am.

All the six accused were produced before the court yesterday. Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23 last year. Two cases — one relating to the murder and another under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 1995 — were filed with Gulshan thana after the brutal killing.

In the charge sheets of both the cases police accused seven persons — domestic help Shahid, contractor Hasan, supervisor Badal, carpenter Shant Ram, guard Humayun Kabir and two maids named Parveen and Masum. Of them, guard Humayun Kabir died of a cardiac arrest on January 11.

Following is a brief account of the answers given by Latifur See Page 12 Col 4

Detention of Aziz Bhai illegal: HC

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday declared the detention of Aziz Mohammad Bhai illegal and without lawful authority.

The Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice M A Quddus after hearing the writ petition filed by his wife Naurin Aziz gave the verdict.

Earlier on January 31, the court issued rule upon the government to show cause within two weeks as to why the detention order against him should not be declared illegal and without lawful authority.

Aziz Bhai was arrested on January 6 under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Subsequently, under the Special Powers Act, 1974, his detention order was issued on January 7.

Later he was shown arrested See Page 12 Col 3

Malaysian FM tells The Daily Star Trade and investment to be mainstay of the D-8

By M Anwarul Haq



Syed Hamid Albar

The Malaysian Foreign Minister has said the D-8 will soon establish itself as a 'practical, operational and pragmatic' organisation.

"Although it has emerged as an off-shoot of the OIC, the D-8 is a more forward looking organisation and a meaningful group."

"Developing countries want to have something tangible and not rhetorical. It is our expectation that the D-8 would be able to take up projects which are activity oriented and achievable." Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar told The Daily Star in an interview on Saturday.

When it was launched, there was considerable speculation even among developing countries that it would be a 'Talk Shop' but holding of the second summit within a year and half and the Dhaka Declaration would serve as a major milestone in the march forward of this 'emerging bloc', he said.

"Trade and investment would be the mainstay of the D-8. We are going to emphasise trade facilitation measures as a first step towards increasing economic and commercial co-operation."

"Our experience in ASEAN and other regional cooperation forums has shown that trade facilitation measures have contributed towards enhancing trade and investment flow."

Malaysia, he said, is going to organise seminars and work-

shops on trade facilitation. It would also offer its cooperation and share its experience in Islamic banking, insurance and re-insurance.

Speaking about the East Asian economic situation, Syed Hamid Albar said the crisis was triggered off in July, 1997 when economic fundamentals were the strongest in Malaysia.

Although the crisis had an adverse impact on the Malaysian economy, adoption of 'selective control measures and insulation of the Ringgit' by the government against international currency movement revived the economy.

"In Malaysia, we do not allow short term capital in the country and have fixed parity between the Ringgit and the Dollar. We have been able to insulate the Ringgit against outward flow and there is an exit tax."

"We are beginning to witness positive results and an upturn in our economy because of the exchange control measures. We expect one per cent growth this year while only last year we had a negative growth of 6.8 per cent."

Inflation is now only 5.6 per cent and our (foreign currency) reserve have gone up to 6.8 billion Dollars.

The Malaysian Foreign Minister observed: There should be a restructuring of the financial scenario as we go for globalisation. There can not be unfettered market economy without See Page 12 Col 4



Foreign Secy Mustafizur Rahman dead

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman died at a Singapore hospital yesterday. He was 57.

Family sources said that he was suffering from lung cancer and underwent a minor surgery at Glenage Hospital there. He died at 6:45 pm BST.

He had gone to Singapore last month for treatment.

Mustafizur Rahman was known in diplomatic circles as an astute diplomat, soft-spoken, firm, honest and fair.

He had joined the then Pakistan Foreign Service in 1964 after a short stint in the Air Force.

Rahman defected in favour of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation while he was posted in Kathmandu. He served the country in various capacities and was high commissioner to Malaysia and ambassador to Myanmar, Russia and China.

He was in Beijing as envoy for three and half years before he was appointed foreign secretary. See Page 12 Col 7

Khulna's 'top terrorist' Shanu arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 28: Golam Mousa Shanu, 32, a top terrorist of the city, was arrested from Haji Meher Ali Road this morning.

His name was on the top of the list of 40 alleged terrorists and professional killers supplied to the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) recently by the ruling party.

The alleged terrorist told po-

lice that he was an armed cadre of the Islami Chhatra Shibir, but hired by the leaders of Jatiya Party, BNP and ruling Awami League for killing their rivals.

He also confessed to the police that BNP leader Shuja was killed by him on April 22, 1995 and Jubo League leader Bablu on December 18 the same year.

Police said Shanu was also involved in the murders of Jubo League city convenor Anwar Hossain on January 30 and Jubo League activist Shahjahan on January 12 this year.

Apart from these four murders, Shanu is also accused in a number of cases including muggings, extortions, rapes and rioting filed with five thanas of the city.

He killed the two Jubo League men within two weeks of January on the premises of City Awami League Office.

These two murders were a sequel to intra-party rivalry of the ruling party for which he was hired, said OC, Kotwali thana who led the operation for arresting him.

See Page 11

Dhaka's reaction to HR Report

Bangladesh is of the view that despite several shortcomings, the US government's observation contained in 'Human Rights Report on Bangladesh for the year 1998' has some positive elements.

When contacted about the reaction of the government to the report, acting Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed told BSS yesterday that 'the report for 1998 has some positive elements. It is better than the 1997

See Page 11

An Appeal to D-8 Summit Leaders

Make Movement of Labour Free Across the World

In our world one out of six goes to sleep hungry every night, one out of three lives under subsistence level. North-South America, Australia are the lands of immigrants. Millions of hectares of land in these continents have remained unutilized. People from other countries are refused entry to the above lands through discriminatory laws. But one immigrant has no moral right to deny immigration to another person.

Further, thousands of employers in the developed countries including those in the above continents can employ poor workers from other countries. Under the present Free Market Economic Order movement of all commodities and all factors of production have been made free. Labour is a commodity and also a factor of production. But the entry of labour from other countries to the developed countries are restricted by rules. To free the mankind from the present level of hunger, poverty and deprivation, movement of labour across the world should be unrestricted. Visamuktawisa Andolon submitted a memorandum on 24th October, 1998 to the United Nations General Secretary to adopt a Resolution in the General Assembly to give the Employers of all countries the right to employ any worker from any country of their choice.

We appeal to the leaders of D-8 Dhaka Summit to take steps to make movement of labour free across the world in line with the said Memorandum.

We welcome you to Bangladesh and wish the summit a success.

Engr. S. M. Shaheedullah
Convener-Committee of Advisors
Visamuktawisa Andolon

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PANEL PROJECTION MEETING WILL BE HELD TODAY, MARCH 01, 1999 AT 5.00 P.M. AT GRAND BALLROOM OF PAN PACIFIC SONARGON HOTEL, DHAKA.

MR. MOSTAFA GOLAM QUDDUS, PRESIDENT, BGMEA AND PANEL LEADER, SAMMILITA PARISHAD WILL INTRODUCE HIS PANEL OF CANDIDATES HOW WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ENSUING BGMEA ELECTION'99. THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF BGMEA ARE REQUESTED TO KINDLY ATTEND THE MEETING TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

KUTUBUDDIN AHMED
CHAIRMAN
SAMMILITA PARISHAD
ENVOY GROUP

MR. SIRAJUL HAQUE
CHIEF CO-ORDINATOR
SAMMILITA PARISHAD
STERLING GROUP

'EC must have administrative and financial autonomy'

By Nurul Kabir

The chief election commissioners of South Asian countries strongly believe that the administrative and financial autonomy is essential for the Election Commissions to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure impartial elections in the region.

"We emphasise further that the administrative and financial autonomy is a sine qua non for an Election Commission to fulfil its responsibilities and for ensuring its impartiality," says the draft declaration adopted at a conference of the Chief Election Commissioners of South Asia in Kathmandu.

"Every Election Commission must be empowered with all means and ways to ensure free and fair election," the declaration said.

The declaration also underscored the 'urgent need to check

effectively the growing influence of money and muscle power in manipulating electoral process" and affirmed that "such unscrupulous practices should be prevented."

The conference, held on February 13 and 14, was chaired by the Nepalese Chief Election Commissioner, Bishnu Prasad Shah.

CEC of Pakistan Justice Abdul Quader Chowdhury was present at the conference, while G V G Krishnamurthy and Dayananda Disananayake, members of the election commissions of India and Sri Lanka, represented their respective chiefs. Abdur Rahman, an election commissioner of Bangladesh, was due to represent CEC Abu Hena, but could not attend "due to unavoidable reasons."

However, the election com-

missioners also observed that the electoral roll is central to the election process and the credibility of the whole election system rests on its accuracy and reliability which cannot be achieved without the active participation of the political parties.

The conference also appealed to the political parties to field competent, upright and honest candidates, totally discouraging aspirants with criminal and corrupt records. "It will serve the larger interest of democracy."

The conference also felt that the media and civil society should play a vital role in creating general awareness among masses and educating them about their valuable voting right in selecting the best candidates to represent them in all

See Page 12 Col 1