



The Daily Star

Pioneer
HI-FI
RANGS GROUP

VOL. IX NO. 50 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

FALGOON 25, 1405 BS

DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 9, 1999

ZILQUAD 20, 1419 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Cabinet approves changes in city corporation laws

The Cabinet has approved the proposed amendments to the city corporation laws, reports UNB.

The approval was given at the cabinet meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Cabinet also approved in principle the draft of the Medical and Dental Profession and Private Clinic and Laboratory (Control) Bill, 1999.

It also adopted a condolence resolution on the demise of Emir of Bahrain Sheikh Isa Bin Salman al Khalifa, said an official handout.

Special project for women launched

By Staff Correspondent

The International Women's Day was observed in the country as elsewhere in the world yesterday with a renewed call to eliminate gender inequality.

This year's theme of the Day was 'Equality of Rights in State and Family'.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

This year's programme in the country was launched by launching of a Tk 15.58 project to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to provide policy guidance and address gender equality. The project, styled 'Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality' (PLAGE), announced by Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury at a function at the Shishu Academy here yesterday, will be implemented in three years.

Launching the PLAGE, the Speaker said that the CIDA-aided project would help the

Shazneen's father faces defence queries for eighth day

By Staff Correspondent

Latifur Rahman, father of murdered teenager Shazneen, was cross-examined by the lawyer of supervisor Badal, an accused in the Shazneen murder case, for the eighth day in the Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday. The questioning continued for more than two hours starting from 11:25 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. There was one case for murder

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Indian commerce minister in city

Indian Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hedge arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This is Hedge's first visit to Bangladesh, official sources said.

The minister will be present at the opening ceremony of Indian trade exhibition at the Osmani Memorial Hall today.

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Prayer Timings

March 9		
Fajr	5:30	5:35
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:10	6:13
Esha	7:25	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Mourning continues in Jessore amid plenty of questions

From Shehab Ahmed

JESSORE, Mar 8: The giant replica of a dhol, the drummer of rural Bangladesh, stands forlorn in vigil of the Jessore Town hall maidan. Someone has clamped a black flag lofting over the drummer's head. The black flag, like the hundreds of others fluttering over the southwestern city, mourn the eight who were killed in a massive explosion, ripping through the Udichi Shilpi Goshthi's cultural night on Sunday.

"When the first bomb exploded, it left all of us stunned, shell-shocked and running all around, some diving to cover. It went off with a massive sound, shaking the earth beneath my feet, just when a baul singer had sung his first two lines in Jessore accent. The lyrics were open your lamp on my dear to cut through the darkness. Monir, 24, his arm still bandaged from a splinter, said.

The lean athletic rickshaw van peddler from Nairampur.

Jessore, had been one of the thousands of ordinary souls who had come in search of a late night escape from their day to day struggle. They were walking down the mystic singer's tunes and other musical presentations harnessed from the rich

Bombs exploded in Jessore normally used by army

By Our Correspondent

CID sources said that the splinters discovered at Jessore Town hall indicated that the bombs exploded there were normally used by the military. Ordinary people are not supposed to have access to such military hardware. The timing device required to detonate such bombs need specialists, they said.

In south-western Bangladesh
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tations harnessed from the rich trove of rural Bangladesh that marked the end of the Udichi's three-day national conference in the maidan.

The three-day conference had enjoyed participation by many artists from rural Bangladesh, providing not only traditional songs but also piping very strong messages against fundamentalist and reactionary forces that would like to turn the clock back on Bangladesh by a thousand years.

But the early-hour explosions that had left everyone confused about the type of explosive and modus operandi of the yet to be unidentified bombers who left over a 100 wounded, 36 still in serious condition in different hospitals of Jessore, Khulna and Dhaka.

Just who were they? Every-one asked as they continued to visit the maidan where the

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Members of different cultural groups stand in silence at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday where they gathered to protest killings in bomb blasts at Jessore Sunday.
—Star photo

Separate laws on terrorism, women repression drafted

By Reaz Ahmad

The government, responding to strong protests from rights groups, has finally given up its plan to incorporate anti-terrorism clauses into a new law to prevent women and child repression.

The government has now decided to enact two separate laws. The other will have provisions for summary trial to contain terrorism in the country, the law minister confirmed.

It has been almost two years now that the Prime Minister had said that tough laws would come to deal with offenders against women and child repression.

But the first draft of proposed Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Ain (prevention of repression on women and children act) drew immediate protests from women groups in the country. They were enraged to see that four clauses (13, 14, 15 and 16) of the proposed legislation had nothing to do with curbing repression on women and children. Rather, they pointed out, those were designed to contain incidents of sabotage, mugging, tender disputes and other terrorist activities.

"All sabotage and terrorism-related clauses have been dropped from the fresh draft that is ready for the Cabinet's approval soon," Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said.

Sources in the ministry said many women leaders had already made queries whether the terrorism-related clauses were dropped.

Representatives from some
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Sammilita Nari Samaj brought out a rally in the city yesterday to mark the International Women's Day.
—Star photo

Khaleda warns against 'wrong policy' Extract mineral resources keeping 'future' in mind

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has said steps should be taken to extract mineral resources of the country considering its own utilisation capacity and keeping in view the future requirement.

"We have to remember that the deposits of our oil and gas are not unlimited. Any mistake in taking decision in this regard, willingly or unwillingly, may lead the country towards a long standing crisis as in some other countries of the world," she cautioned.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of 43rd conference of Engineers Institution in the city yesterday evening, the BNP

Chairperson said correct and clear cut decision has to be taken giving national interest top priority in extraction and utilisation of oil, gas and other mineral resources.

"We have to ensure maximum utilisation of our limited resources for lasting welfare of the people and the country. We will lose the strength to keep our heads high if we lose control over our national resources and hand over our domestic market to others due to wrong decision or to meet temporary necessity and petty personal interest or," the former prime minister observed.

Begum Zia said "Our capability is limited and aspira-

tions of our people are also not unlimited." Their expectations for basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, education and medicare and for democracy and rule of law are in no way high expectations.

But, she said, a large number of people are being deprived of these minimum needs and unfortunately the existing situation is deteriorating day by day. Unemployment, increasing number of landless people, devaluation of currency, price hike, deterioration of law and order, wrong policies and unchecked smuggling are rapidly pushing the nation and the country towards ruin.

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Ijaz Ahmed, Shoaib Akhtar included for Dhaka Pak cricketers arrive today

By Hasan Masood

A 14-member Pakistan cricket team led by Wasim Akram will arrive in the city this morning to play the inaugural Asian Test Championship final against Sri Lanka at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from March 12 to 16.

The Pakistanis, who finished their round match against Sri Lanka in Lahore

yesterday, hardly had any rest before heading for Dhaka. They left Lahore last midnight for Karachi from where they are scheduled to fly for Dhaka early this morning.

Pakistan made two changes from the 14-man team that played the Lahore Test.

Middle-order Ijaz Ahmed and right-arm fast bowler

Shoaib Akhtar, who played the first match of the Test championship in Calcutta last month, are back in the team replacing Mohammad Wasim and Fazle Akbar.

Miah Mohammad Munir, who acted as assistant to Shariyar Khan during Pakistan's tour of India last month, See Page 12 Col 8

Case sent to Court 6

Rafiqul Huq objects, later withdraws petition

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Justice ATM Afzal on Sunday sent the case regarding the removal of four Beximco Directors from the board of directors of AB Bank and IFIC Bank to court No Six to be heard along with 26 other cases of bank directors of similar nature, court sources said.

Earlier Court No 23 expressed embarrassment in hearing the case which led the Chief Justice to take the decision.

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HC suo moto rule challenged

Hartal fundamental right: AG

By SC Correspondent

The government yesterday challenged the HC suo moto rule saying hartal is a fundamental right.

The government submitted that the High Court Division has no jurisdiction to issue and dispose of the suo moto rule regarding the pro-hartal and anti-hartal activities.

Yesterday when the HC took up the matter for hearing Attorney General Mahmudul Islam on behalf of the government submitted an affidavit-in-opposition to the rule.

Barrister Maudud Ahmed on behalf of BNP Secretary Gen-

eral Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan prayed for time to submit affidavit-in-opposition and the court adjourned the hearing till March 22.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday came to the court and swore an affidavit-in-opposition to the rule, but the same was not submitted before the court yesterday.

"There having been no proceeding pending before the Division Bench of the High Court Division, there is no scope of applying the provisions of Section 561A of the Code of Crimi-

nal Procedure and that this Bench has no jurisdiction to issue and dispose of the present Rule," the government said in the affidavit-in-opposition.

The government said that every citizen of Bangladesh has the fundamental right to freedom of expression which is guaranteed under Article 39 of the Constitution.

But this fundamental right is subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of, among others, security of state and public order or relating to incitement to an of-

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BENSON & HEDGES CONCERT CANCELLED

We regret to inform you that due to unavoidable circumstances, we are compelled to cancel the Benson & Hedges concert that was scheduled to take place on the 12th of March at Gulshan Park behind Wonderland.

Please take your tickets to the same place where you have purchased them for full refund.

We offer our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused. However, we look forward to bringing you similar exciting events sometime within the next few months.

Sponsor and Organisers

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