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AJM polls amid tight security today

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 13: CBA election at the Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM) will be held tomorrow (Sunday) amid tight security as violence is apprehended.

Campaigning ended at 9 am today without any untoward incident. But it was alleged that the trade unions were bringing out processions and carrying out propaganda in the name of "zikir" and other religious rites.

Official sources said one thousand policemen and contingents of BDR and Armed Police will maintain law and order in and around the AJM during the polls.

Ten magistrates led by an Additional Deputy Magistrate will also be there to take quick decision in any emergency situation, the sources said.

Ten to fifteen "trouble spots" have been identified and police will also be deployed near labour colonies to maintain law and order.

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Share scam

Hearing on appeal for transfer of cases today

By Staff Correspondent

Hearing on an application for transfer of share scam cases to the court of the First Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka will resume in the court of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge today.

Defence lawyers had filed an application before the court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge on Thursday last praying for sending the cases back to the court of the First Additional Sessions Judge, court for their quick disposal since it had heard those earlier.

The Metropolitan Session Judge's court had started hearing the application on Thursday but the prosecution objected to the defence prayer.

The cases involve Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Shineeupur Holdings and Doha Securities. Earlier, hearing on charge framing against the accused had started on January 3 in the court of Mia Mohammad Sharif, First Additional Sessions Judge.

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Report on city corporation bills finalised

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on LGED and Cooperatives Ministry yesterday finalised report on the four City Corporation (Amendment) bills for placing in the Jatiya Sangsad, reports UNB.

The bills are — The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999, The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999, The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999 and The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1999.

The bills were earlier placed before the House and sent to the committee for scrutiny, said a press release.

The committee after elaborate discussion made the final report with some amendments, the release added.

Presided over by committee chairman Abdul Mannan, the meeting was attended by LGED and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Advocate M Rahmat Ali, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khaleque and Whip Mujibur Raq.

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Praful Bidwai writes from New Delhi

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Prayer Timings

March 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:30	5:35
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:20	6:25
Esha	7:30	7:35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Ambitious plan to fund industrial projects

By Staff Correspondent

The government plans to mobilise hundreds of crores of taka in new funds to help industrial projects, Finance Minister S A M S Kibria told business leaders yesterday.

According to the plan, the government is eyeing as much as Tk 2120 crore for the purpose.

Kibria said the government would issue industrial bond worth Tk 1000 crore in two phases. Bonds to raise Tk 500 crore would be floated this month.

Foreign currency bonds would be floated soon to raise US\$ 200 million (Tk 1000 crore) from non-resident Bangladeshis.

The minister said the World Bank had also agreed to provide US\$ 25 million (Tk 120 crore), to be replenished after one year. The finance secretary returned last Thursday after signing a deal in this regard with the World Bank, he said.

Kibria said the process of loan distribution would be disclosed shortly.

"Of the total amount US\$ 150 would be distributed as loans for you," Kibria told a group of businessmen at a seminar in the city on "Impact of High Equity Requirement on Industrial Development", organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

Responding to a recommendation from the DCCI President MH Rahman to create equity participation fund (EPF), Kibria said that the government would consider the suggestion of creating such a fund for the northern region.

He said the opening of Bangabandhu Multi-purpose Bridge has created an opportunity for the northern region. "Such fund may be a good option for providing equity support to the entrepreneurs of the less developed areas."

During pre-Liberation time it was felt that despite higher debt-equity and underwriting-cum bridge financing facilities provided by the DFIs, there existed an equity gap which hindered the process of industrialisation, especially in the less developed regions including the present region of Bangladesh.

DCCI President MH Rahman said in his key note paper.

"In order to help accelerate the industrialisation in those less developed areas, the then government of Pakistan created the 'equity participation fund' in 1969 by an act of parliament for providing equity support to the entrepreneurs of the less developed areas and placed the management of the fund under IDBP, predecessor of present day Bangladesh Shilpa Bank.

"The fund is known to have provided equity support to a large number of enterprises up to 1971. After liberalisation the EPF was merged with BSB and none had hard anything of it thereafter though BSB had secured substantial cash resources and investments in Bangladesh belonging to EPF," the DCCI president said. (A detailed story on Business Page)

AL won't use students in party interest: PM

CHITTAGONG, Mar 13: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today unequivocally declared she or her party would never use the students in petty party interest and urged the opposition to reciprocate her overture, reports UNB.

"The student community has long been used to serve party and narrow political interests," she said urging all other political parties to sincerely come up supporting the initiative as a measure to free the educational institutions from violence.

"We never used the student community for political purposes and will never do so," she said addressing the second convocation of Chittagong University as Chancellor of the varsity.

Earlier, the Prime Minister, as president of the ceremony, formally inaugurated the convocation programme immediately after ascending the podium, leading to a convocation parade.

Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Deans of the Faculties, Education Minister A S H K

Sadique and renowned academic Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui joined the parade wearing formal convocation robes.

Shortly after the opening, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed over diplomas to the scholars who obtained PhD and M Phil degrees from the University.

The PhD holders are Sourendranath Biswas (1983), Shipra Rakshit Dastidar (1989), Gazi Salehuddin (1994), Sheikh Sirajul Islam (1998) while Md Nazrul Haq Chowdhury got M Phil in 1994.

The Prime Minister also conferred diplomas on the MA, M Com, MSS, MSc, BA (Hons), BSS (Hons), BCM (Hons), BBA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MBBS, BA (Pass), BSS (Pass), BSc (Pass), LCB, B Ed, BFA (Pass), DA, DCH, DCO, and DGO degree holders.

The Prime Minister in her presidential speech told the function that any solitary effort is far too inadequate to do the onerous task of freeing the university campuses from terrorism.

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Protests against terrorism in Ctg continue

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 13: Protests against terrorism continued in the port city.

Local dailies again kept blank space on the front page of today's issues protesting terrorism and published story on the same page on crime incidents.

Chittagong Sangbadpatra Parishad, Chittagong Union of Journalists and Chittagong Press Club jointly demanded arrest of all terrorists irrespective of party affiliation and this was written in the blank space of local newspapers again today.

The 'Azadi' today carried out a story on the front page, headlined "Chittagong heaven for terrorism, people are hostage to it."

The local newspapers last

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Businessman's son abducted in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 13: Armed terrorists abducted a son of a businessman from the city's Agrabad area last night.

The victim, Shamsul Alam, son of Raja Mia, was abducted from his shop at gun point at around 8 pm after his father refused to pay tolls to the terrorists, police said.

Raja Mia also received injuries as he tried to resist them, police added.

Police failed to rescue the victim till filing of this report tonight.

JCD calls strike at DU to protest PM's visit

By DU Correspondent

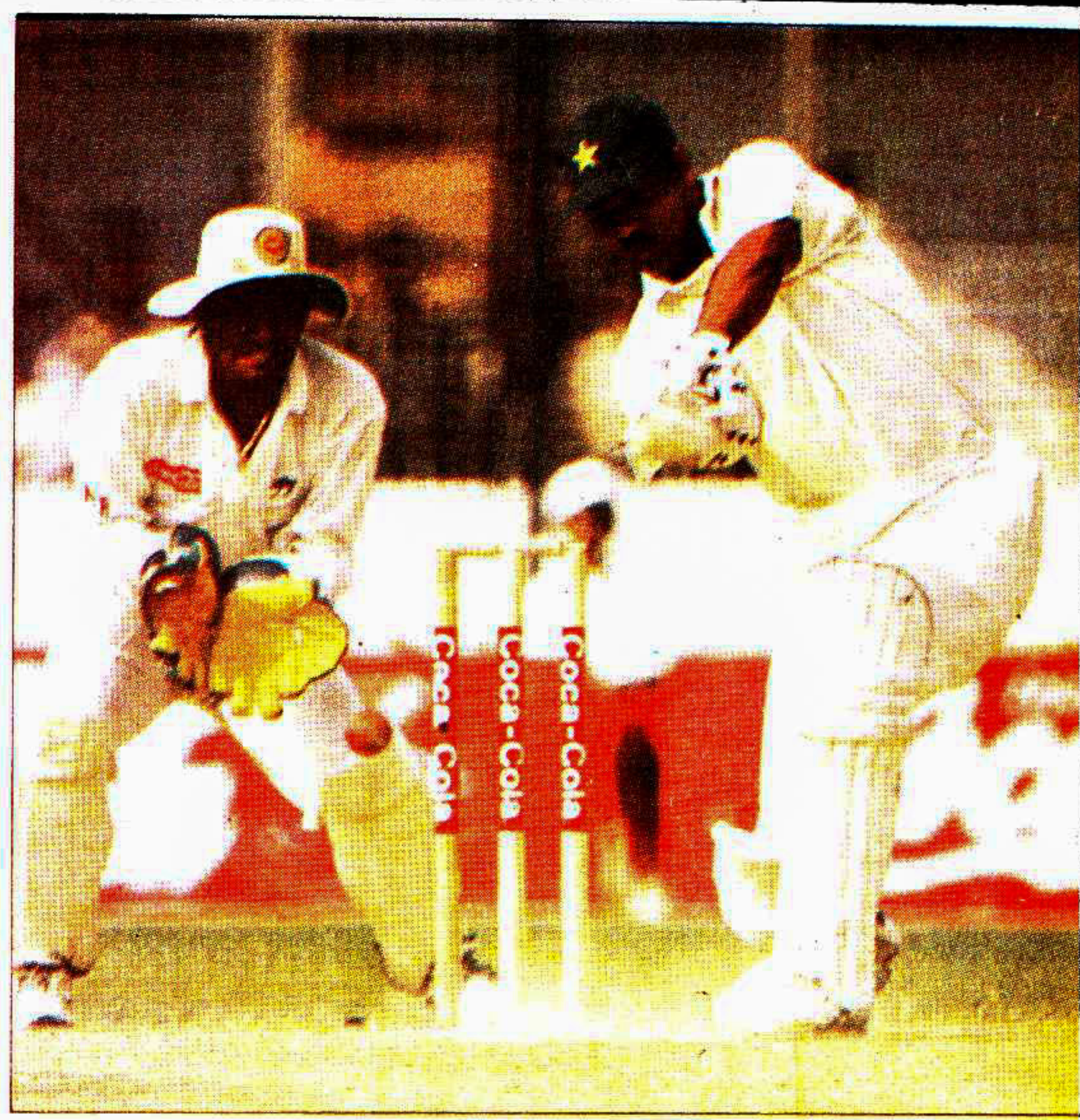
Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, has called for a strike at Dhaka University on Tuesday to protest Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to the campus on the day.

JCD general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu gave the call at a rally in front of the Aparajeya Bangla yesterday.

Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to visit the university on Tuesday to inaugurate Bangabandhu Chair in the Department of History.

"We are going to enforce the strike to protest Sheikh Hasina's arrival on the campus as her government continues repression on JCD men across the country and failure of DU authorities to take action against those responsible for attack on

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Pakistan's century-maker Ijaz Ahmed off-drives during the second day's play of the Asian Test championship final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo

Ijaz unbeaten at 118

By Al-Amin

Ijaz Ahmed scored his 11th Test ton yesterday as Pakistan, thriving on a solid batting performance from their top order,

took a lead of 68 runs against Sri Lanka on the second day of the Asian Test Championship final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Ijaz was unbeaten on 118 as Pakistan, resuming on the overnight score of 33 for no loss, went on to amass 299 for two wickets after bowling Sri Lanka out for 231 on the first day.

The experienced right-hander partnered with Inzamam-ul-Haq to put on 182 runs for the third wicket. This gave Pakistan two batting-bonus points. The islanders on the other hand returned empty-handed after a disappointing day under the sweltering summer sun.

Three more days left to decide the fate of the first ever Asian Test Championship, Pakistan have ensured the

Asian Test trophy if the match was to end in a draw.

Pakistan have six points -- four from bowling and two from batting -- against Sri Lanka's two from batting, leaving Sri

mark with an exquisite cover drive that went for four in an eventful over from Chaminda Vaas.

Ijaz, when on 94, smashed three consecutive boundaries in

we SCORE... while others watch

Standard Chartered

Lanka in a must-win situation.

Coming in to bat at number three, Ijaz found a perfect partner in Inzamam after the left-handed opener Saeed Anwar departed for a century 57.

The 32-year-old batsman from Sialkot, who was going through a lean patch, put behind the disappointment of the Calcutta Test (one and 11) when he reached the three-figure

the 91st over off the Sri Lankan speedster, who took the second new ball in the 83rd over but ended up conceding 17 runs.

Let off by makeshift wicket-keeper Hashan Tillekeratne while on 59, Ijaz played 176 balls and hit 14 boundaries to become the ninth batsman to score a century on this ground.

Tillekeratne stood for regular

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Begum Zia demands

Form judicial body to probe Jessore tragedy

JESSORE, Mar 13: Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia today asked the government to form a judicial body with a sitting judge of the High Court to probe the explosions here that

at least 9 killed and more than 150 injured early Saturday, reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at the Eidgah Maidan here this afternoon she said the people of 10 southwestern districts have become hostage of armed terrorists under the rule of present regime.

"Law and order has completely collapsed in this region when all kinds of crimes have increased manifold. Security of life and property is at stake," Begum Zia said.

The BNP chairperson accompanied by her deputies flew in here to sympathise with the bereaved families of the grenade victims.

Coming out of the airport she drove straight to the general hospital and later to the makeshift army hospital where the injured were being treated. She wanted to know about the tragic incident from the injured.

Begum Zia went to the residences of Tapan, Sandhya Rani and Nurul Islam who were killed in the grenade blasts at a

cultural function of Udichi Silpi Gosthi. She expressed shock at the tragedy and sympathised with the bereaved families while talking to them.

The opposition leader announced Tk 5,000 for each family of the deceased and asked the party members to extend all possible assistance to them.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Mir Shawkat Ali, Abdul Moyeen Khan, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Zahirul Amin Khan, Barkatullah Bulu, Giasuddin Khatun Chowdhury and Ahmed Nazir accompanied the BNP chairperson.

Begum Zia also questioned the origin of the powerful grenades.

Exchanging views with the local journalists at circuit house, the BNP chairperson said explosive experts of the Army who examined the remnants of the grenades said they even do not possess such weapon.

Repeating her demand Begum Zia said judicial body with a sitting judge of the High Court should be formed immediately to probe into the tragic incident.

Expressing views on the incident, local journalists told the opposition leader that the

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Opposition's mass contact programme March 22

BNP-led opposition alliance will observe countrywide mass contact programme on March 22 to gear up the current anti-government movement, reports UNB.

BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Okiya Jote will hold separate public meetings in the capital on the day.

It was decided at a meeting of the liaison committee of the allied opposition at 29 Minto Road yesterday morning.

BNP will hold its meeting at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm while Jamaat at Muktangan and IOJ near its party office at Purana Paltan.

Party sources said the Jatiya Party would announce the venue of its meeting later.

Chaired by BNP vice-chairman Shamsul Islam, the meeting was attended by Anwar Zaid of BNP, Kazi Firoz Rashid of JP, Quamaruzzaman of Jamaat and A R M Abdul Matin of IOJ.

Alleged dacoit beaten to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

An alleged dacoit was beaten to death by a mob in the city's Kafrul area where two dacoities were committed in the early morning yesterday.

Police and hospital sources identified the dead as Mohammad Selim, 22, son of Alauddin. According to police, Selim was caught by the mob while he along with six others attempted to escape after robbing Tk 79,000 in cash, gold ornaments and valuables.

The gang broke open a window glass of a ground floor flat at North Kafrul at about 5 am, pointed a pistol at the old mother of the landlord and forced her to open the door.

When she opened the door, the gang stormed into the house, looted the cash and valuables and tried to escape after a scuffle with some young inmates.

Hearing a hue and cry, people from nearby houses rushed there and caught Selim but the six others escaped.

The mob beat Selim. Police rescued Selim from the mob in a fatally injured condition and took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 10:40 am.

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Schoolboy beaten to death in city

A schoolboy was murdered allegedly by his friends in the city's Kafrul area yesterday, reports APB.

Hospital sources quoting family members said Selim Chowdhury, 14, son of Alauddin and a student of class X at Lalar Sarail High School of Ibrahimpur under Kafrul thana was called out from his residence and beaten up mercilessly at about 9 in the morning.

Later, police rescued him from the locality in a critical condition and sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at 10:30 am.

None was arrested in this connection till the filing of this report.

Rubber, soap factories gutted

By Staff Correspondent

A fire gutted about 32 tinshed rooms housing rubber, soap and metal factories at Kamalbagh under Keraniganj thana in the early hours yesterday.

According to Fire Service sources, the fire originating from the flames of a gas stove engulfed the rooms of Kazi Humayun within an hour starting from 3:30 am.

No casualty, however, was reported in the incident till last night. The extent of damage could not be estimated immediately.

Drilling of Well-5 at Rashidpur Gasfield completed

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Mar 13: Drilling of Well-5 at Rashidpur Gasfield has been completed, official sources said tonight.

"Some highly technical and post-drilling tests are now being conducted to ascertain the depth of perforation point," one source said. However, it will take a few weeks more to complete cementing, casing etc of the well. Drilling was done up to a depth of 2980 metres, till yesterday, he added.

Drilling of the well began on January 5 with a targeted depth of 9500 feet. The project is being implemented by Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL), a unit of Petrobangla under its Gas Infrastructure Development Programme (GIDP), financed by the World Bank and IDA. Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) of India had been given the task of drilling under a contract signed on May 27 last year. A German firm, Dowel Schlimberger, is the consultant for the project.

Russian Ballet Night at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

—Star photo

'80 pc structures in city deviated from approved plan'

By Staff Correspondent

Steps must be taken urgently to implement the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (Master Plan) 1995-2015 which was gazetted about two years ago.

This was said at a seminar on "Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (1995-2015) Implementation" Situation held at the Rajuk auditorium in the city yesterday.

The seminar was jointly organised by Rajuk, Paribesh

Rakkha Shapoth (Parash), Centre for Urban Studies, Coalition of Environmental NGOs, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association, Centre for Sustainable Development, Bangladesh Environment Network and Institute for Environment and Development.

The speakers stressed the need for immediate start of the first phase of reviewing the recommendations in the Master Plan. The plan suggested that its recommendations must be reviewed every five years, the speakers noted and called for formation of a high-powered task force for this.

They observed that Rajuk was not a people-oriented organisation and it did not also have any accountability. The common man must be involved in Rajuk's development process, they stressed.

Among the speakers, Barrister Amirul Islam focused on legal issues in implementing the Master Plan. He said that until 1987, Rajuk was a trustee with some sort of people's participation. But that was replaced by the present system in which only six people including the Chairman are 'owners' of the organisation. Rajuk is very powerful and it does not have any accountability whatsoever, he said.

It is not necessary to have new laws. Only if the existing laws are implemented, a lot can be achieved, he said adding that the concept of trustee should be brought back.

Rajuk Chairman Azizul Haque presented a list of development activities but said the organisation was facing various problems regarding land acquisition. It has now become a 'culture in our society to violate construction laws'. More

than 80 per cent of the structures in the city had some sort of deviations from the approved plan, he said.

Haque said that through legal loopholes, Gulshan lake was being derequisitioned by a section of people. This must be stopped. Rajuk has a lot of limitations including serious lack of manpower. Consultants were being engaged to complete the 26 Detailed Area Plans for the

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